



# THE BOY AT THE EDGE OF EVERYTHING

BY FINEGAN KRUCKEMEYER

ENGAGEMENT MATERIALS AND  
RESOURCES FOR EDUCATORS

*Department of*  
**Theatre Arts**

#usutheatre

[theatre.usu.edu](http://theatre.usu.edu)



Caine  
College of the Arts  
Utah State University

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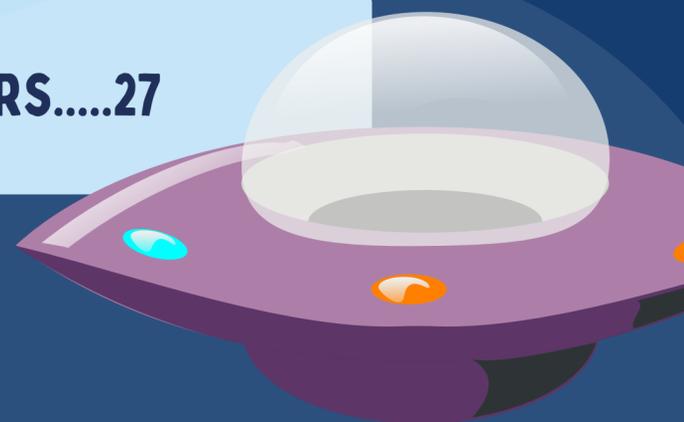
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# WELCOME

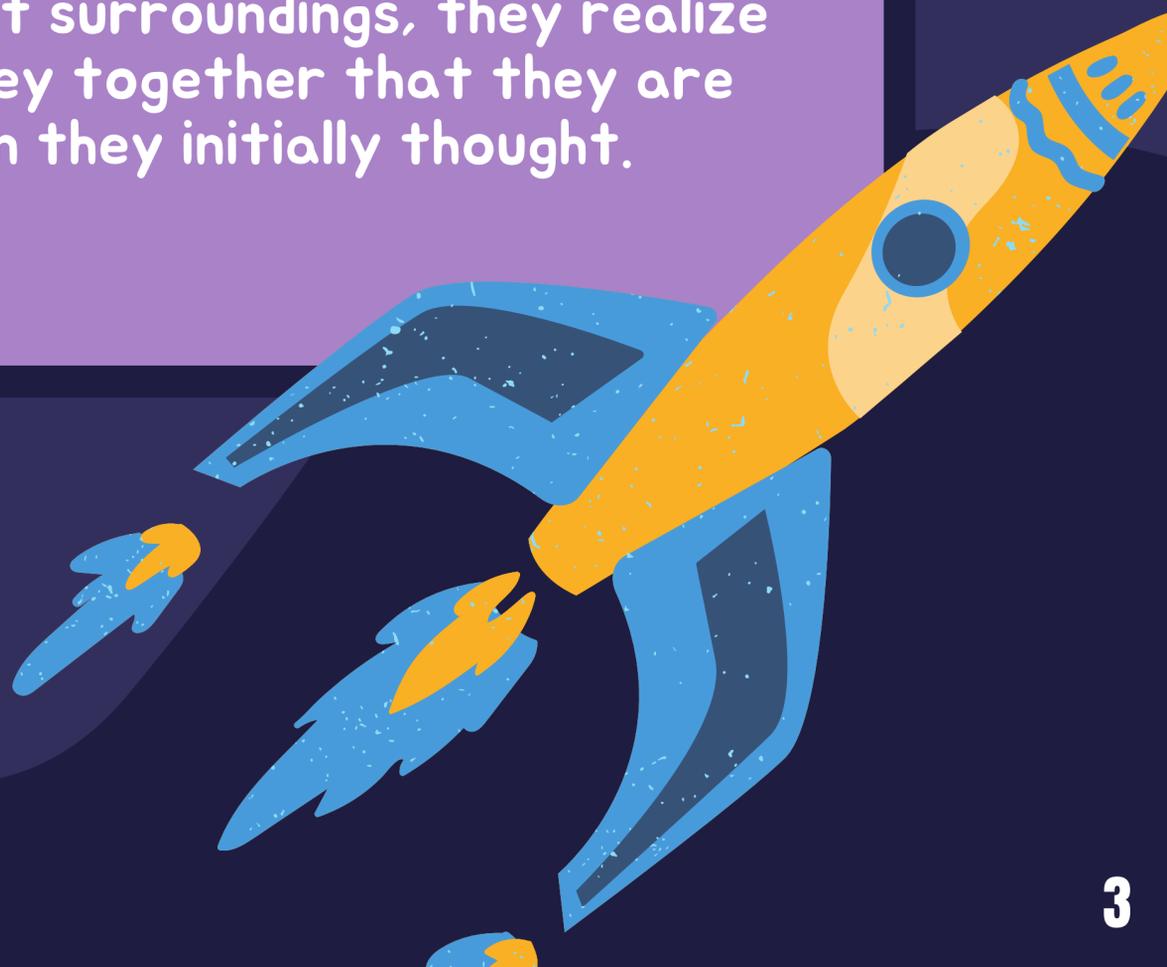
## TO OUR

# WORLD!



'In a place far, far away – beyond all that there is, beyond even all that there isn't – The Boy at the Edge of Everything sits and... be's.'

The world that The Boy lives in is much more vast and wide in comparison to Simon's. However, despite their different surroundings, they realize through their journey together that they are more similar than they initially thought.



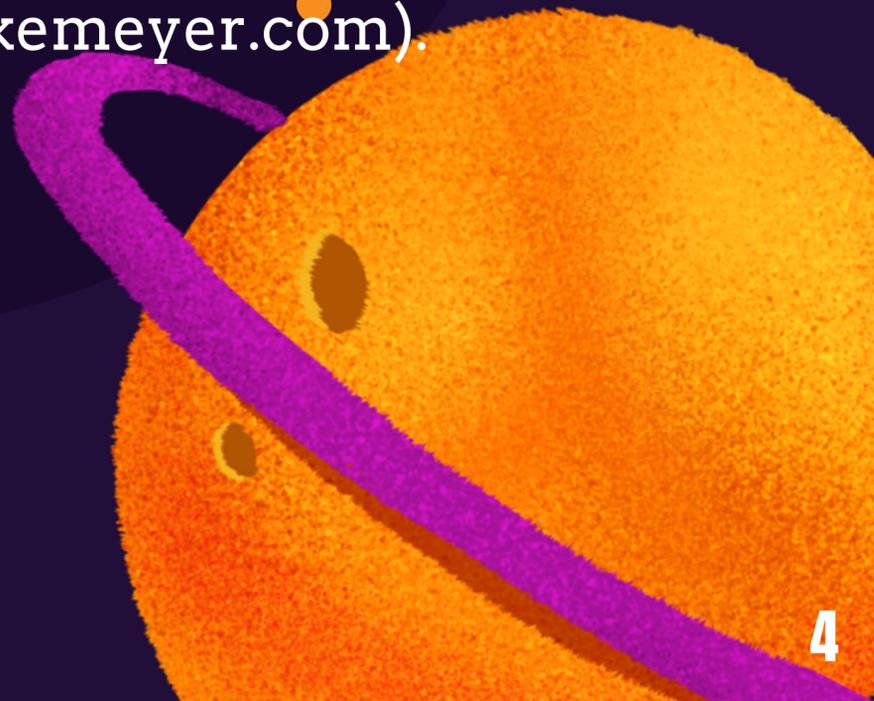


**THE PLAYWRIGHT**

# **FINEGAN KRUCKEMEYER**

Finegan Kruckemeyer is an Australian playwright. He primarily writes plays for young audiences and has written over 100 plays in all. Some of his other great titles include 'This Girl Laughs, This Girl Cries, This Girl Does Nothing' and 'Where Words Once Were'. He currently resides in Tasmania with his wife and his son.

"He is committed to making strong and respectful work for children, which acknowledges them as astute audience members outside the play, and worthy subjects within" ([www.finegankruckemeyer.com](http://www.finegankruckemeyer.com)).



## LETTER FROM SIMON

Hi Everyone! My name is Simon Ives, and I'm so excited for you to see the show! I know life can be pretty busy with homework, soccer practice, taekwondo, family dinner, and whatever else you've got on your plate, so thank you for taking the time to get to know me and my friend, The Boy at the Edge of Everything. You'll get to meet my family, including my annoying little brother Louie, travel through space, and see The Boy's amazing house! Rumor has it that it's so much bigger on the inside. Can't wait to see you soon!

*~Simon Ives*



# MEET THE CHARACTERS



**SIMON IVES**

Simon is probably the busiest 12 year old on the planet. He plays soccer, does taekwondo, takes swimming lessons, goes to school, learns Chinese, and eats dinner with his family every night. He dreams of a place where he can just stop and do...absolutely nothing.

The Boy at the Edge of Everything lives . . . well at the edge of everything. He knows a lot about everything, but experiences little of what the universe has to offer. The Boy has seen millions of lives come and go, but has never lived himself. He is inquisitive, eager to learn, and rather uncoordinated.



**THE BOY**

# MEET THE CHARACTERS



**SIMON'S MOM  
(HELEN)**

Dad loves making his famous lasagna and working at the botanical gardens. He thinks he's the funniest person in the world and loves spending time with his family.

Mom has a lot of degrees in things like human development, early civilizations, and psychology. She loves being a mom because she gets to watch her kids develop and discover their own fascination with the world. Mom likes to keep busy, and only ever slows down to take care of her family.

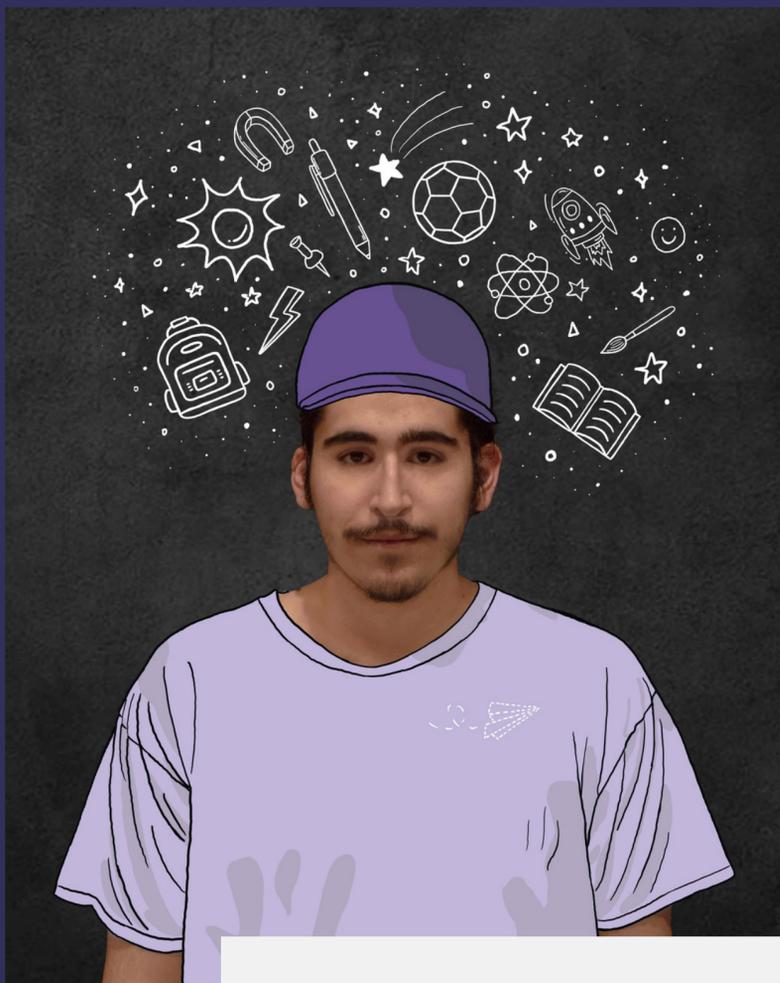


**SIMON'S DAD  
(DOUG)**



# MEET THE CHARACTERS

Middle school and space are filled with all sorts of other kids! These are some of the other faces you might encounter on your adventure with Simon.



## STUDENTS/FARAWAYS

ALSO LOOK OUT FOR MS CHESTER,  
ARTIE AND MICHAEL.

# Themes

Change

Imagination

Mental Health

Connection

# CHANGE

Simon deals with a change of environment when blasted into space and confronts feelings of loss, grief, and loneliness while away from home. The Boy's world turns upside down when he meets his new friend, and realizes what he's been missing out on being on his own.

Common ideas related to change and where they're seen in the play:

**Coming of Age:** The Boy leaves the safety of his world to grow up.

**Living in the Moment:** Simon missed his busy life, despite disliking it at the time.

**Mortality:** Simon grappling with his own mortality as his family grapples with his loss. The idea that the world will end someday is also discussed.

**Grief:** Simon grieves his family and the life he left behind, while his family grieves his life back on Earth, and we see the reality of losing a child and how his family copes with that.

**Nostalgia:** The Boy and Simon feeling nostalgic for life on earth in their own ways.

# IMAGINATION

There is more to the world and the universe than we know of! Simon and The Boy explore new ideas, planets, and ways of life by exploring their worlds and diving into their imaginations.

Common ideas related to imagination and where they're seen in the play:

**The Universe:** The universe is vast! Our concept of time and space as we know it can vary, and The Boy's universe and world that he lives in is so different from Simon's. Their worlds connect despite being so far apart.

**Childhood:** Children and young individuals are always finding new ways to explore the world around them, as we see The Boy and Simon do throughout the play. There is no shortage of fun or new ideas, and their imagination leads them to where they needed to be.

# MENTAL HEALTH

We see both Simon and his family struggle with their mental health throughout the play.

Common ideas relating to mental health and where they're seen in the play:

**Loneliness:** The Boy lives in his own world away from others. He doesn't experience what it's like to be with other people for a while, and once he's away from it he feels lonely. Simon also feels lonely and isolated due to his busy schedule.

**Stress:** Simon is constantly feeling overwhelmed due to all of his homework and extracurricular activities. It leaves him feeling tired and stressed.

**Grief:** Simon's family deals with his loss, which affects their mental health. Louie doesn't talk for awhile, Helen doesn't brush her hair or change out of her pajamas, and Doug keeps getting his lasagna wrong from being in a hard head space.

# CONNECTION

The connections between the characters in the play says a lot about them and the world of the play.

Common ideas related to connection and where they're seen in the play:

**Family:** Simon deeply loves and cares for his family, and they feel the same way about him. They support each other, but sometimes their eagerness does more harm than good. Having a good balance and letting others express their feelings is a good way to form stronger connections.

**Friendship:** Simon and The Boy have a friendship that transcends universes and time. When The Boy didn't think he needed it, he found a friend in Simon, and the two fostered a connection that helped both of them when in need.

**Earth:** Both Simon and The Boy have a strong connection with Earth. The Boy was able to watch it grow up, and give him hope. The Earth is Simon's home, and it is full of the people he loves. Both have different connections, but both connections are important.

# Layers of the Atmosphere

Explore the sky with Simon as his capsule takes off!



*Having conversations related to the content, themes, and structure of the show is a great way to help students critically engage with it! Here are some questions to help get the discussion started for before and after you watch the show:*

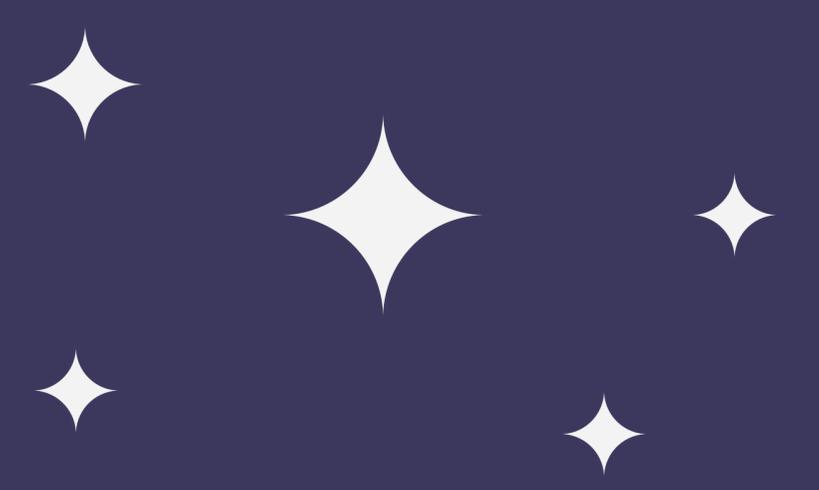


## PRE-SHOW QUESTIONS

- What is a play? How is it different from a movie or TV show?
- What is the title of the play? What does it tell you?
- What do you predict the play is going to be about?
- Read the character descriptions on pages 6-9. What do you think each character wants? How will that affect the story?
- Do you ever feel overwhelmed? How do you handle that feeling?

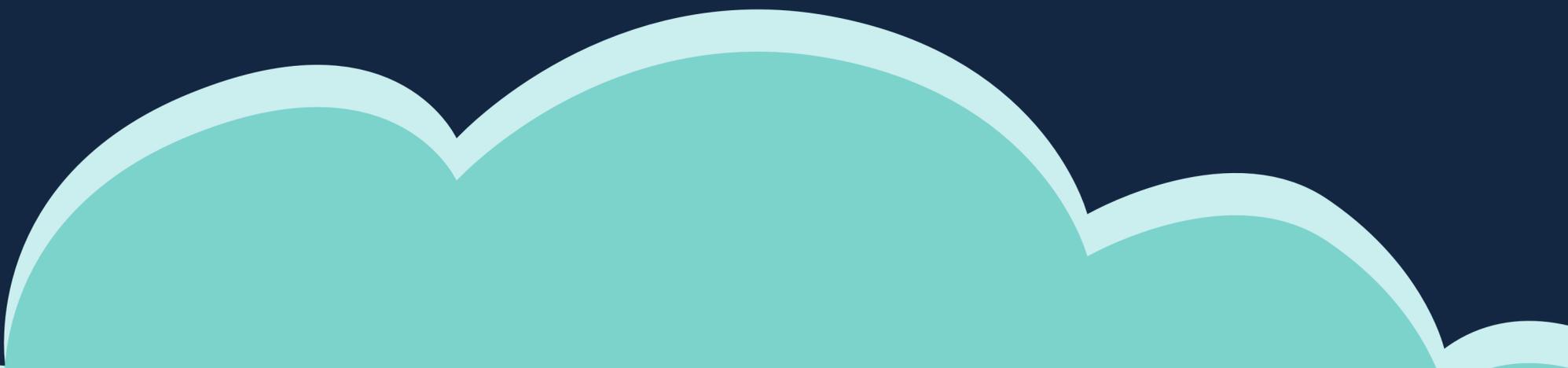
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## POST-SHOW QUESTIONS



- What is the main message of this play? What does the playwright (the person who wrote the play) want you to think about? What was the big idea?
- Does this play remind you of anything else you've already seen or read? Why?
- How did the characters change from the beginning to the end of the play? Who do you think changed the most?
- What was the most interesting thing you learned from the play?
- Did the play end the way you thought it would? Would you have ended it differently?

# Activities for Home or in the Classroom



## Utah Core Standards: (Grade: 4-6)

- Science 4.4.1
- Science 6.1.3

### Goals/Objectives:

- Explore ideas about space travel with students.
- Help students envision the solar system and its immense size.
- Create a small scale model of our solar system.
- Engage the students through imagination and creativity.

### What You Need:

- Field or large open space
- 9 children
  - For more items for students to hold, you can include satellites, stars, etc.
  - You can also split the students into groups of 10 (where one of the students is the sun) and have each group do this activity.

### What You Do:

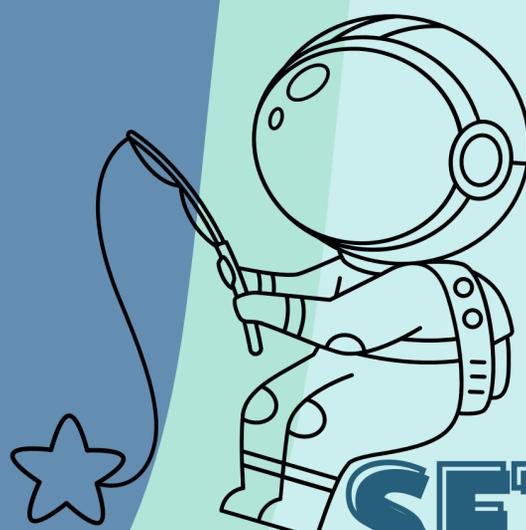
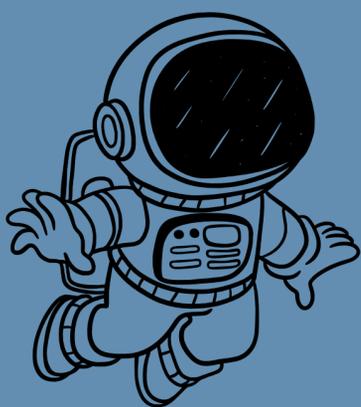
- Stand at one side of the field. Explain to the children that you are going to make a map of the solar system. You will represent the Sun and each of them will represent a planet. The scale you will be using is one step = 36 million miles.
- Pick a child to mark the place of Neptune. Neptune is 2.8 billion miles away from the sun, or 78 steps. Have this child walk 78 steps in a straight line away from the Sun.
- The next child represents Uranus, 1.8 billion miles, or 50 steps, from the Sun. This child should follow the same path as Neptune.
- Next comes Saturn, 885 million miles, or 25 steps from the Sun.
- Jupiter should stop 483 million miles, or 13 steps from the Sun.
- Mars is only 142 million miles, or four steps, from the Sun.
- Earth is 93 million miles, or three steps, from the sun.
- The child representing Venus only needs to take two steps to reach 67 million miles away from the Sun.
- Closest in is Mercury, at only 36 million miles (one step) from the Sun.



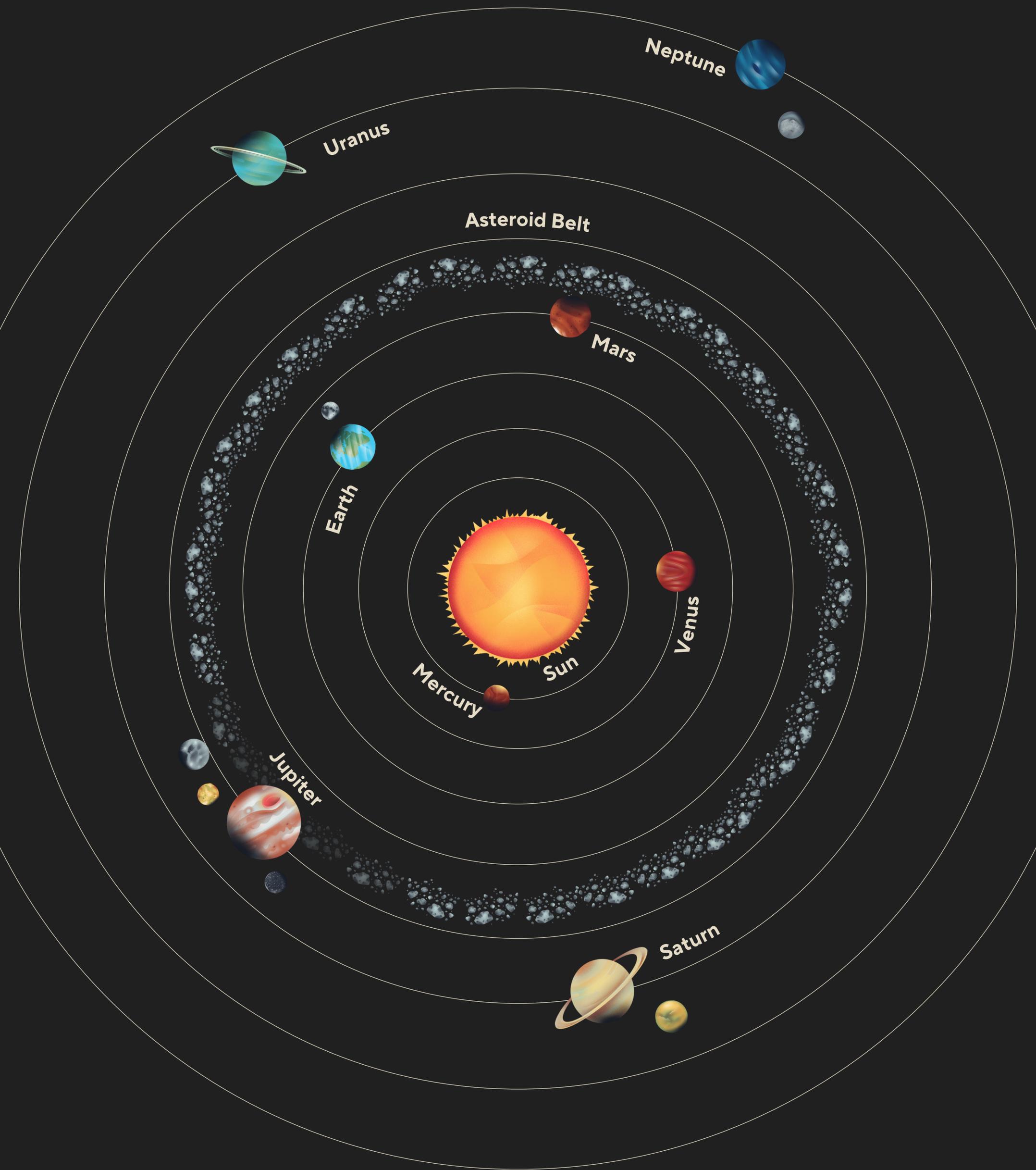
# SET UP A SOLAR SYSTEM OF KIDS

## Transition/Reflections:

- Once students are arranged as the solar system, have the students look around at the distance between themselves and their peers. Have the students think about the size of the solar system, and the possible size of other solar systems.
- After the students have had time to observe the solar system they have created, call the students back in for a discussion: Given these distances, how long would it take to travel between planets?
  - It took Mariner 4 about 6 months to reach Mars. Ulysses reached Jupiter in about 14 months. Voyager II took 12 years to reach Neptune
  - What will be necessary before space travel is possible, even just within our own solar system?



**SET UP A  
SOLAR  
SYSTEM OF  
KIDS**



# THE SOLAR SYSTEM

Sun · Mercury · Venus · Earth · Moon · Mars · Asteroid Belt · Jupiter · Ganymede · Callisto · Io · Saturn · Titan · Uranus · Neptune · Triton

# CHARACTER COLOR CODING



UTAH CORE STANDARD: Sixth Grade Language Arts 6.R.7

LEARNING GOALS: Students will develop literary analysis skills by examining the characters of the play and discussing what makes them similar and different from one another, as well as how that affects the story as a whole.

## ACTIVITY

1. Break your students into small groups and assign each group a character or two. Have them compare and contrast characters by connecting them to colors that represent them--for example, perhaps Simon is like the color blue because he is observant and wants more peace in his life. Make sure your students are backing up their choice with traits the characters show in the play.
2. Once every group has a color and two or three traits associated with it for their character, bring the class back together to share the colors they chose and why. Alternatively, list the colors of the rainbow on the board/a piece of large paper and have your students write the name of their character beneath the corresponding color.
3. After everyone has shared, ask them whether the characters' colors change throughout the play. What made them change? Perhaps some characters changed colors and others didn't--why is that the case?
4. Ask them how their characters' colors/their traits affected the story. Would the story have been different if the characters had different traits? Would it have caused them to act differently? Would they have interacted with the other characters the same way? Make sure to have them give specific examples.

# CHARACTER COLOR CODING

## Additional Resources

Use this list of characters or refer back to the character introductions on pages 6-9 for the activity:

- The Boy at the Edge of Everything
- Simon Ives
- Mom / Helen Ives
- Dad / Doug Ives
- Louie
- Chloe
- Michael
- Artie
- Ms Chester

Optionally, you can give your students this chart, linked [here](#), to help them connect colors with character traits:

<b>RED</b> Excitement Love Strength Bravery	<b>GREEN</b> Luck Jealousy Balance Liveliness	<b>BLACK</b> Dramatic Sophistication Secretiveness Protectiveness
<b>ORANGE</b> Confidence Energy Friendliness Warm	<b>BLUE</b> Peacefulness Intelligence Trustworthiness Sadness	<b>WHITE</b> Calmness Cleanliness Simplicity Honesty
<b>YELLOW</b> Creativity Happiness Hopefulness Optimism	<b>PURPLE</b> Elegance Ambition Royalty Sorrow	<b>BROWN</b> Dependability Resilience Safety Comfort

# SOCIAL AND EMOTIONAL LEARNING ACTIVITY

## **SEL Definition:**

Social and Emotional learning is a program that helps students develop life skills to help them in their relationships and their mental health. It can be integrated into any subject, across all grade levels.

## **Main learning goals for the activity:**

Explaining what self-awareness is and how to manage overwhelming emotions.

# ACTIVITY PROCESS

- Explain to the students the definition of Self-Awareness. Self-awareness is the ability to name the feelings you are experiencing.
- Explain that it is normal to feel overwhelmed by emotions now and then. Tell the students that the students can help themselves calm down through certain tools.
- Explain you will now walk the students through space-themed breathing and meditation exercises inspired by *The Boy at the Edge of Everything* (written out below).
- Wrap up the activities by explaining that the students can use these meditations when they feel overwhelmed. (For example: We can feel several emotions at the same time or even just one emotion very deeply. Sometimes it can feel overwhelming. If you ever feel like you are struggling, you can use these exercises to help you calm down. Deep breathing and focusing on one thing at a time will help you find a sense of calm).

Below are worksheets to help solidify the student's understanding of the Social and Emotional Learning Category: Self-Awareness.

# SPACE MEDITATIONS

## Rocket Breaths:

- Have the students stand up straight with their feet shoulder-width apart.
- Explain that they are rockets. Have the students squat down and take a deep breath.
- Then have them slowly stand back up, raising their arms into a peak above their head all while exhaling on a shhh sound as if they were a rocket shooting into space.
- Repeat the process as many times as you want.



## Star Meditation:

- Have the students lie down on the floor with their eyes closed. Guide the students into taking deep breaths. (Ex: Breathe in 1,2,3. Hold 1,2,3. Breathe out 1,2,3. Breathe in 1,2,3...)
- Then once the students have the breathing pattern down guide them through a body scan and explain that the students will need to focus on relaxing those muscles. (Ex: think of your feet. Relax them...think of your legs. Are they tight? Focus on relaxing them....etc) .
- Once you have mentioned from the feet to the head instruct the students to slowly open their eyes and sit up.

# SPACE MEDITATIONS



## Astronaut Helmet Breathing:

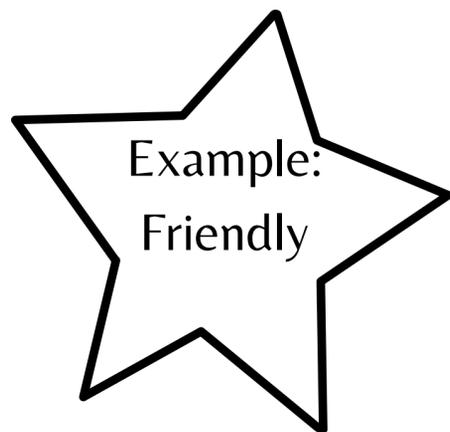
- Have the students sit in crisscross on the floor. Have them mime as if they are putting on a space helmet.
- Then close their eyes and quietly imagine they are floating in outer space. Guide the students into taking deep breaths. (Ex: Breathe in 1,2,3. Hold 1,2,3. Breathe out 1,2,3. Breathe in 1,2,3...)
- Once the students establish a deep breathing pattern ask them to focus on how their breathing sounds and to think about how it would feel to hear your breathing in an astronaut helmet. Explain to them that focusing on their breathing can help them calm their mind and reset their body.

## Re-entry Meditation:

- Have the students sit in their chairs with their feet planted on the ground. Lead them to take deep breaths. (Ex: Breathe in 1,2,3. Hold 1,2,3. Breathe out 1,2,3. Breath in 1,2,3...)
- Once the students are in a deep breathing pattern ask the students to silently answer the following questions in their head:
  - What can I feel? Perhaps how the fabric of your clothes?
  - What can I hear? Perhaps my breathing or a bird chirping outside?
  - What can I smell? Perhaps the woody smell of the desk or the cleaning solutions?
  - What can I see? Perhaps the texture of the wall or the shine of the table top?

ASTRONAUT NAME: \_\_\_\_\_

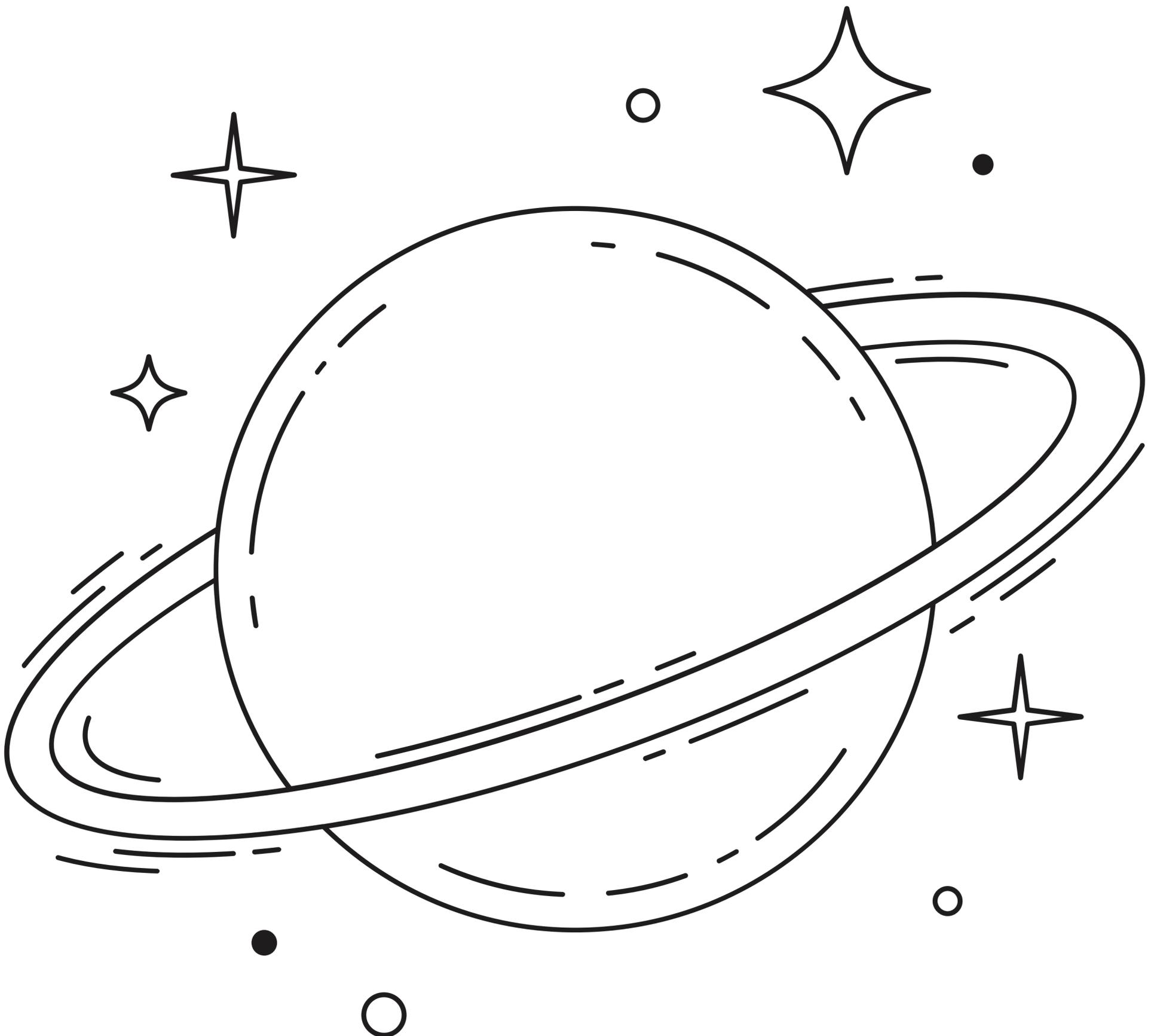
Draw your face in the space helmet below  
and write about your personality in the  
surrounding stars:



# YOUR PERSONAL WORLD

There is a lot that makes up everyone's life. For example: How many siblings do you have? do you have a pet? Where is your favorite place to visit? and so much more.

Draw or write in the planet below what makes you you!



# Resources for Parents and Educators

## American Psychological Association

Provides information on the importance of children's mental health, statistics, and treatment options.

Learn more [HERE](#)

## Centers for Disease Control and Prevention

Resources on children's mental health, symptoms, the impact on child development, and promoting mental health in educational settings.

Learn more [HERE](#)

## National Institute of Mental Health

An article on mental health in childhood, including signs and symptoms, how to address it, and working with the child's educational institution.

Learn more [HERE](#)

## Harvard University

A guide on navigating toxic stress in adolescents, how it affects the brain and body, and how to prevent and address it.

Learn more [HERE](#)



# THANKS!

For more inspiration check out:

*The Little Prince*  
By Antoine de Saint-Exupery

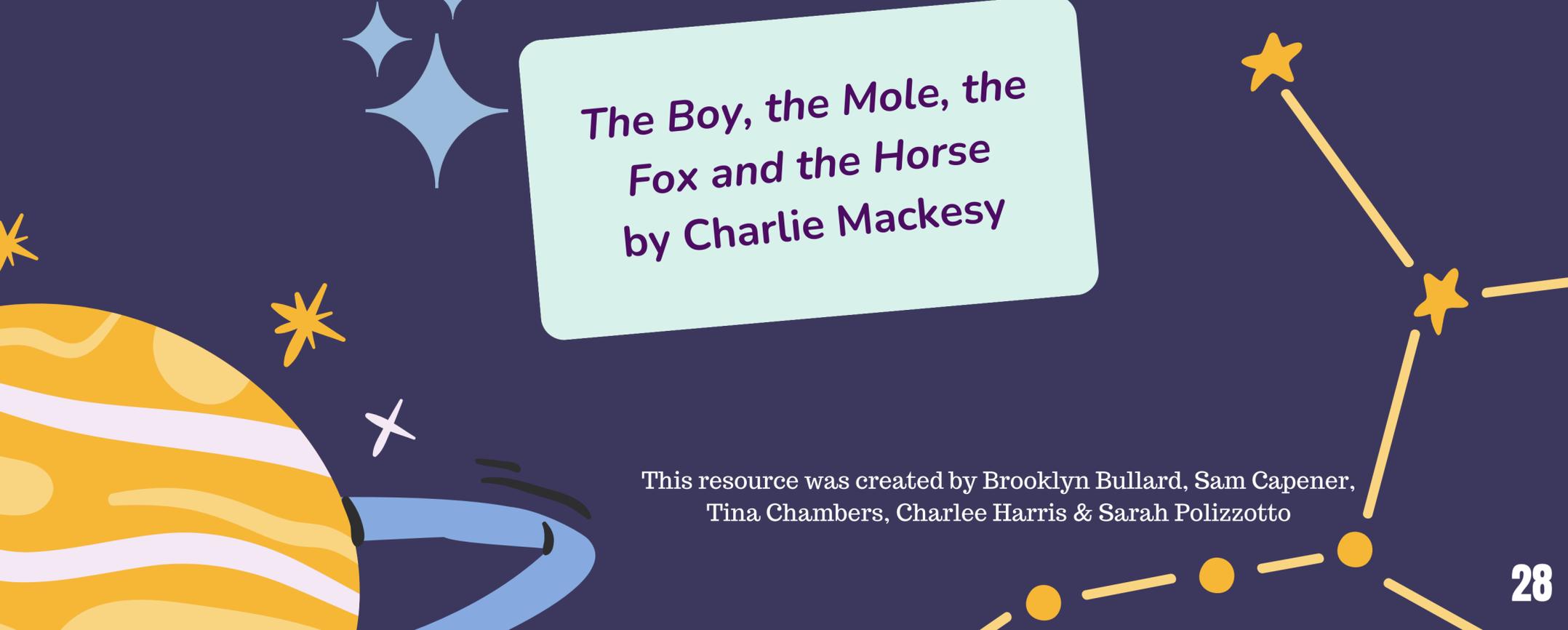
*The Proudest Blue*  
By Ibtihaj Muhammad

*A Wrinkle in Time*  
By Madeleine L'Engle

*Arkansas Bear*  
by Aurand Harris



*The Boy, the Mole, the  
Fox and the Horse*  
by Charlie Mackesy



This resource was created by Brooklyn Bullard, Sam Capener,  
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