

What's at  
the End of  
this Piece of

Rope?

Tania Cox ♥ Jemma Robaard

TEACHERS RESOURCES

# WHAT'S AT THE END OF THIS PIECE OF ROPE?

BY TANIA COX AND JEDDA ROBAARD

## Teachers Resources by Robyn Sheahan-Bright

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# INTRODUCTION

*What's at the End of this Piece of Rope? Would you like some help to see?*

A simple piece of rope requires some very cooperative problem-solving in this lively and entertaining picture book. The child in this book is wondering what exactly is at the end of this rope, so she enlists each animal she encounters to help her to guess, and to join her in pulling the heavy rope to see what it's tied to.

The power of the imagination is also celebrated in this endearing tale written by Tania Cox and charmingly illustrated by Jedda Robaard. This is a rhythmical cumulative text with repetition carefully calculated to entice a young reader into a web of story. It's a predictive read-aloud adventure with lots of visual clues to uncover as you join in the telling, with noise-making and action to add to the fun.

## THEMES & CURRICULUM TOPICS

Several themes are covered in this book that might be related to the Australian Curriculum, including:

### STUDY OF HISTORY, SOCIETY AND ENVIRONMENT

- **COOPERATION**

**DISCUSSION POINT:** The text encourages children to recognise that with the help of a friend or friends you can do more than you can do alone. Discuss the concept of cooperation. Discuss situations in which it is helpful, eg. playing sport, in the classroom, at home or at work.

**ACTIVITY:** Play games that encourage cooperation. For example, play a game of tug-of-war with members of the class. [See **Bibliography.**]

- **PROBLEM-SOLVING**

**DISCUSSION POINT:** The child poses a question and then invites the animals to suggest an answer. This sort of hypothetical response is part of the technique of problem-solving. Invite students to suggest possible answers to the question: *'What's at the end of this piece of rope?'*

- **IMAGINATION**

**DISCUSSION POINT:** Each animal is encouraged to imagine. (There are also hints here that this may be all an imagined game.)

- **ANIMALS**

**DISCUSSION POINT:** Several animals appear in this text: monkey, kangaroo, joey, gorilla, hippopotamus and lion. Invite students to draw one of them. [See also **Blackline Master 1.**]

**DISCUSSION POINT:** Invite students to choose an animal and to research its habitat and environment. (This is an imaginary scenario as the Australian kangaroo appears here with African animals.)

## **ENGLISH LANGUAGE AND LITERACY**

The text of this book might be studied in relation to the following:

**ACTIVITY: Cumulative Tales** rely on a traditional structure in which a character embarks on a journey and encounters a series of animals or people, each of whom ask a repeated question that leads to a climax. Repetition is also important in cumulative tales. The same sequence of words is repeated until the climax, when the order is upset or reversed, and the story is resolved. *What's at the End of this Piece of rope?* is told in the alternating voices of the child and the various animals she encounters, asking each other questions in present tense. Invite students to write a cumulative tale using questions and answers like this. (This story also ends with a new piece of rope and the same question, and so the cycle begins again.)

**ACTIVITY:** The text contains a series of 'doing' words: pull, tug, heave, crash, roar. Make a list of other such words. [See **Blackline Master 2.**]

**ACTIVITY:** Test your students' **comprehension** by asking them questions about the written and visual text. [See also **Author's Notes** below.]

## VISUAL LITERACY

The visual text of a book combines with the written text to tell the story using the various parts of the book's design and illustrations, as explored below:

**ACTIVITY:** The **cover** of a book is an important part of its message. Look at the front cover of *What's at the End of this Piece of Rope?* What does it suggest to you? Invite students to design another cover for this book and display them in the classroom as an exhibition.

**ACTIVITY:** The **endpapers** or inside cover are green with splatters of paint. Create your own endpapers with a splatter pattern like this.

**DISCUSSION POINT:** The **title page** depicts the little girl sitting beside a pot plant with smaller versions of the animals that look like toys. What does this image suggest?

**DISCUSSION POINT:** The **format** of the book is square in shape. Why might the designer have selected this format rather than landscape or portrait format?

**DISCUSSION POINT:** How does the **layout of the storyboard** and the **format and design** of the book influence your reading of it?

**ACTIVITY:** Creating characters entails studying **facial expressions and body language**. Invite students to convey in a drawing how the characters feel when they first see and hear the lion ROOOOAAAAR!

**ACTIVITY:** The **medium or style** employed is pencil drawing, watercolour, pastel (coloured chalk) and collage. [See also **Illustrator's Notes** below.] Encourage students to explore these mediums.

**DISCUSSION POINT:** The **colours** used in this book are soft pastels on white pages. How does colour affect your interpretation of this work?

**ACTIVITY:** Prediction is an important part of picture-book reading. In the frame prior to the appearance of each animal, the pictures contain a hint of their presence. Examine the images carefully for these clues.

**ACTIVITY:** The reader's perspective in observing left-to-right movement across a double-page spread is also important in a picture book, encouraging the reader to follow the action sequentially. What device is used to trick the eye into observing the far right-hand-side, or turning page of the book?

**ACTIVITY:** The lion at the end of the rope is actually in captivity until the five friends free him and he says 'Thank you'. What hints of this captivity can you see in the pictures?

**ACTIVITY:** Invite students to draw, paint, or collage another scene to accompany the cumulative tales they wrote above about another animal joining their tug-of-war. Create a classroom mural using all the images. [See also Blackline Master 1.]

**ACTIVITY:** Create a graphic novel/comic version of a scene in this book. [See Bibliography.] [See also Blackline Master 4.]

## CREATIVE ARTS

There are many creative activities suggested by this text:

1. The characters in this text tug a piece of rope which obviously has someone or something on the end of it – a game known as '**tug-of-war**'. At the end of the text, the child and animals **skip** with the rope. What other games can you play, or crafts can you make, with a piece of rope or string? Examples include:

- String games
- Rope games
- Making knots
- Magic rope tricks
- Macramé
- Rock climbing

Visit the following websites for ideas:

*Animated Knots*

<<https://www.animatedknots.com/>>

'Five string games for kids to play' *Kidspot*

<<http://www.kidspot.com.au/things-to-do/kids-games/5-string-games-for-kids-to-play/image-gallery/4e68bbb4a61cc1f9a34f0fa557e1b55c>>

'How to: DIY String Art for Kids' by Angie Holden July 10, 2013 *Crafts Unleashed*

<<http://blog.consumercrafts.com/decor-home/diy-string-art-for-kids/>>

'How to Make 6 Common Macramé Knots and Patterns' by Kathryn Vercillo  
*Red Heart*

<<http://www.redheart.com/articles/macrame-patterns-and-knots>>

'How to Perform the Three Equal Ropes Illusion' *Wikihow*  
<<https://www.wikihow.com/Perform-the-Three-Equal-Ropes-Illusion>>

'List of Knot Terminology' *Wikipedia*  
<[https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/List\\_of\\_knot\\_terminology](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/List_of_knot_terminology)>

'Rock Climbing' *Wikipedia*  
<[https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Rock\\_climbing](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Rock_climbing)>

'Rope' *Wikipedia*  
<<https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Rope>>

'Rope games' *Youthwork Practice*  
<<http://www.youthwork-practice.com/games/rope-games.html>>

2. Write your name and then glue string over it on a piece of cardboard, just as the word 'rope' appears on the cover of this book. Then frame and hang on your wall.

3. **Create a lion mask.** [See **Blackline Master 5.**]

4. **Create a poster** to advertise this book.

5. **Create a book trailer** to promote this book. [See **Bibliography.**]

## LEARNING TECHNOLOGIES

**ACTIVITY:** Research the topics above online.

**ACTIVITY:** Research the author and illustrator online. [See **Bibliography.**]

## MATHEMATICS

**ACTIVITY:** Have fun counting things in this text.

**ACTIVITY:** See **Blackline Master 3** for mathematics activities.

# Further Topics for Discussion and Research

- Research the work of Tania Cox. Compare this to her other books.
- Research the work of Jedda Robaard. Compare this to her other books.
- Students might research this book in comparison to other cumulative picture books such as those listed in the **Bibliography**.
- Investigate any other topic not covered in these notes which you consider is suggested by this text.

## Conclusion

This is a simple and entertaining book about problems, solutions and how friends bring those together. It's also about preconceptions and imagination. Who would have guessed what was actually at the end of that rope?

## Author's Notes

The inspiration for the story came from when I was trying to find the end of a very long piece of rope. While winding it up, I began to think, 'Where's the end of this piece of rope?' Then suddenly I started feeling excited as an idea for a story began to form about this very long piece of rope! But instead of asking, 'Where's the end of this piece of rope?' I thought it would be more fun to ask, 'What's at the end of this piece of rope?' And perhaps even more fun would be to have the main character ask this question repeatedly throughout the story.

# Illustrator's Notes

These illustrations were created using a number of different mediums. Firstly, I drew the illustration using a grey lead pencil and then 'coloured in' with watercolours and a little bit of pastel (coloured chalk). I then added collage (which is a fancy name for paper cut outs). The rope I used in this story is really a piece of twine.

Once all of this had been drawn, painted, cut out and stuck on to paper, the illustration was scanned and put on the computer. It was then sent away to the publisher to be made into a book.

The animals in this story were inspired by a trip the Werribee Open Zoo in Victoria, Australia.

These animals come from all over the world.

Gorilla – Western Silverback Gorilla from Central West Africa

Monkey

Kangaroo

Joey

Hippo

Lion

<https://www.zoo.org.au/werribee/animals>



# About the Author

**Tania Cox** wrote her first children's story for a school project when she was eleven years old. The story was called *A Day at the Circus*.

Many years later, she completed a degree in Commerce (by mistake!) and then over a period of four years completed external courses in short story writing and children's literature (much to her delight!). After that, she was fortunate to have been mentored by Australian children's book writer/illustrator, Ann James. Tania has also taken part in the residential fellowship awarded by the May Gibbs Children's Literature Trust in Adelaide, South Australia.

Tania has written stories about all sorts of animals. Her first published children's picture book, *Little Bat*, was a Notable Book in the CBCA Book Awards. Two other titles, *Snap! went Chester* and *With Nan* were both short-listed for the CBCA Book Awards where *With Nan* was named an Honour Book. Now that she has her own family, some of their antics have appeared in *What Makes My Mum Happy* (Mother's Day book) and *My Dad and Me* (Father's Day book). A number of her books have also been printed in Korean, Chinese and Spanish. Tania and her family live currently in southern Queensland. More information about Tania can be found at <https://www.taniacox.com>

# About the Illustrator

**Jedda Robaard** is a children's book illustrator and author whose work is well known in Australia and internationally, having been published in many languages, including English, French, Dutch, Greek, Italian, Korean and Chinese.

Jedda grew up in a small town on the island of Tasmania, Australia. She now lives in Victoria, Australia, with her husband, two daughters and a son, a nervous dachshund, a naughty border collie, a couple of cats, a few chickens, and a cockatiel.

Book illustration is an opportunity for Jedda to create little worlds where characters can play, unhindered by society's restrictions. Jedda says, referring to the style of her art, 'The majority of my illustrations have been created simply with pencil and watercolour. They are just puddles of colour if you like. Puddles manipulated into tiny beings with feelings, obligations and agendas'.

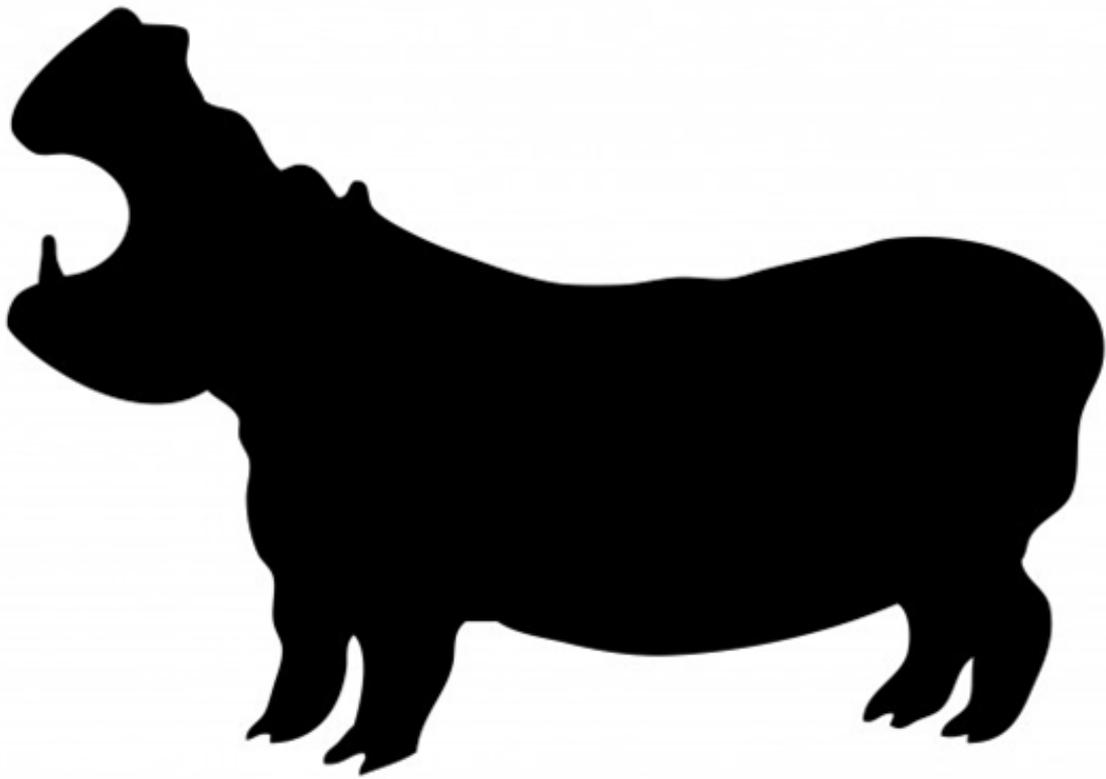
Jedda studied graphic design, but with the inspiration of Australian artists May Gibbs, Bob Graham, Jeannie Baker, Julie Vivas, Shaun Tan and Robert Ingpen, she is now fulfilling her dream of becoming a children's book illustrator. Visit her website for further information: <https://www.jeddarobaard.com.au/>



# BLACKLINE MASTERS

## BM 1. COLLAGE THIS IMAGE

Draw a landscape behind the hippopotamus and then collage it using natural fibres, grass, mud, etc. Collage the body of the hippo as well.



## BM 2. 'DOING' WORDS

Write a list of 'doing' words. Write the meaning beside each one:


Write a sentence using each of these words:

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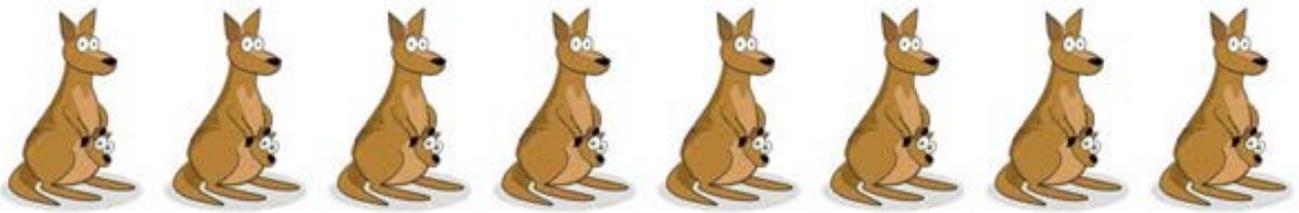
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### BM 3 ANIMAL MATHS

Q. 1. How many pairs of monkeys are in the line below?



Q. 2. If you took three kangaroos away from the line below, how many would you have left?



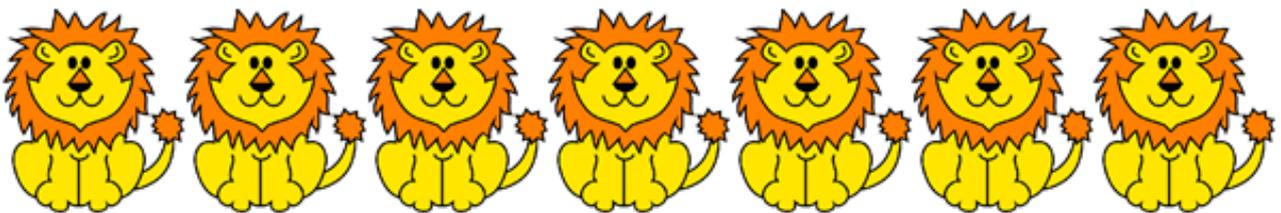
Q. 3. Divide the number of gorillas in the line below by three.



Q. 4. If you multiplied the hippopotamuses in the line below by five, how many would you have?



Q. 5. If you doubled the number of lions in the line below, how many would you have?

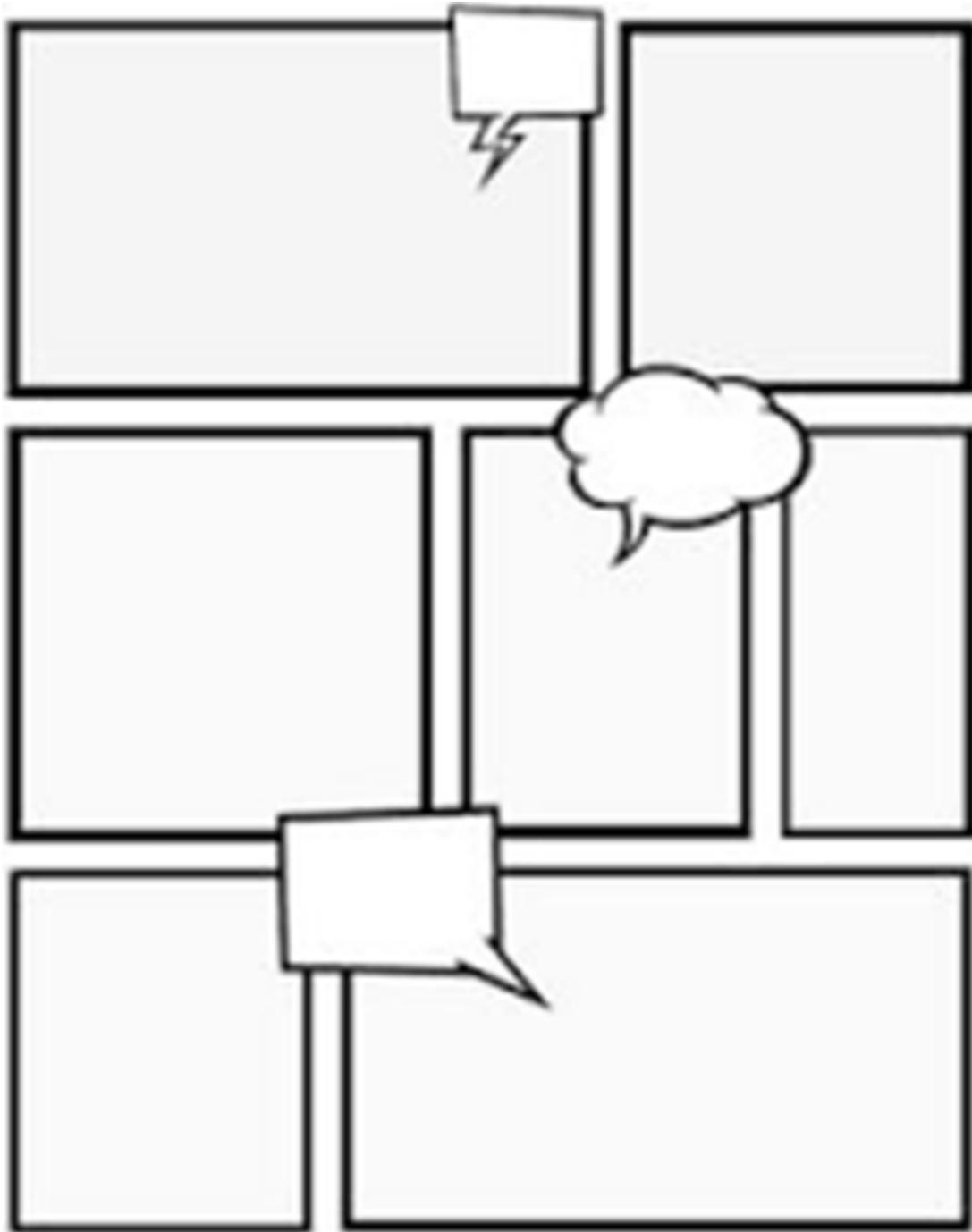


Q. 6. How many animals appear on this page?

ANSWERS: 1. Two. 2. Five. 3. Two. 4. Thirty-five. 5. Fourteen. 6. Thirty-two.

## BM 4 GRAPHIC STORYTELLING

Create a graphic novel/comic interpretation of one of the scenes in this book. Use the layout below as the storyboard for your comic. Enlarge on a photocopier to give you more space.



Comic Book Template viewed at:  
<<http://www.pinterest.com/pin/365706432212821426/>>

## BM 5 LION MASK

Enlarge the mask below on A3 craft paper and cut it out. Colour it in and then add elastic to the sides to put over your head.

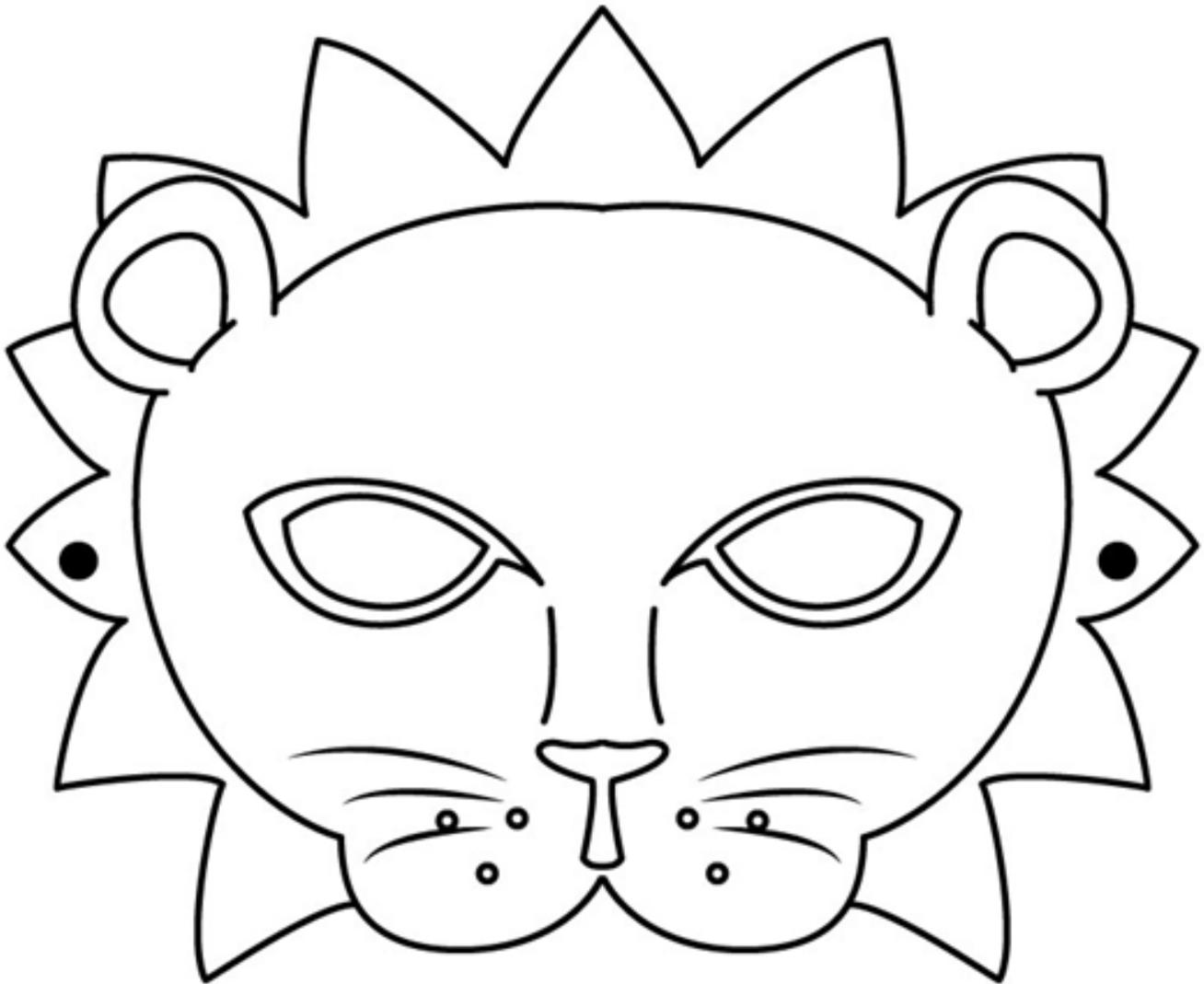


Image of mask courtesy of: <[http://www.hellokids.com/c\\_29500/coloring-pages/masks-coloring-pages/lion-mask](http://www.hellokids.com/c_29500/coloring-pages/masks-coloring-pages/lion-mask)>

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# About the Author of the Notes

**Dr Robyn Sheahan-Bright** operates justified text writing and publishing consultancy services, and is widely published on children's literature, publishing history and Australian fiction. In 2011, she was the recipient of the CBCA (Qld Branch) Dame Annabelle Rankin Award for Distinguished Services to Children's Literature in Queensland, in 2012 the CBCA Nan Chauncy Award for Distinguished Services to Children's Literature in Australia, and in 2014, the Queensland Writer's Centre's Johnno Award.