

MEGAN MCKEAN

# Seasons in the City

Discover the changing seasons throughout the year, from Sydney to Paris and all around the world!

**TEACHERS RESOURCES**

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## Teachers Resources by Robyn Sheahan-Bright

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# INTRODUCTION

Discover the changing seasons throughout the year, from Sydney to Paris and all around the world!

Do you know springtime in Tokyo is cherry blossom season? Or that on the longest day of summer in Stockholm the sun stays up for eighteen hours? Seasons divide the year and bring about changes in the world around us. Different seasons bring warm or cool weather; snow or extreme heat; wet, windy weeks or dry, dusty days; and even big weather events like super storms and twisting tornadoes. In cities all around the world, people celebrate the changing seasons with colourful celebrations and activities. Find out what the seasons look like in 24 different cities in this beautifully illustrated book for readers and travellers of all ages.

## THEMES & CURRICULUM TOPICS

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

### HUMANITIES AND SOCIAL SCIENCES (HASS)

Several themes and topics are relevant to the following Curriculum Area: <<https://www.australiancurriculum.edu.au/f-10-curriculum/humanities-and-social-sciences/hass/>>. Investigate the following sub-topics using skills developed in this Curriculum Area relating to **INQUIRY AND SKILLS** and **KNOWLEDGE AND UNDERSTANDING**:

1. *Develop Methodology and Research Using Primary and Secondary Sources;*
2. *Synthesise and Evaluate Evidence;*
3. *Present Evidence;*
4. *Develop Alternatives.*

### SEASONS

**DISCUSSION POINT:** Seasons create long or very short days in different parts of the world. Research this aspect of seasonal changes.

**DISCUSSION POINT:** There are opposite seasons in the northern and southern hemispheres. This means that even though, for example, many people celebrate Christmas in both hemispheres, the differing seasons impact on how we celebrate. What is winter like in Australia? Does it vary according to what state you live in? What is winter like in Iceland? Explore the seasons in Australia and in various parts of the world with your students.

**DISCUSSION POINT:** 'Some cultures divide their year into six or more seasons that mark subtle changes in weather, but in certain tropical regions there are no more than two seasons: wet and dry. In most cities around the world the year is divided into four seasons: spring, summer, autumn and winter.' (p 3) How are seasons

recognised in the country or state that you live in?

**DISCUSSION POINT:** This book focuses on seasons in the city, rather than in rural areas. Obviously seasons impact on farming, but what impact do seasons have on city life?

## COUNTRIES AND CULTURES

Invite students to embark on a project exploring the culture of a particular country. The work they each do could then be displayed.

**DISCUSSION POINT:** ‘Throughout history people have welcomed new seasons with important rituals.’ (p 3) Choose a country and research the rituals attached to seasonal celebrations there.

**DISCUSSION POINT:** Food features in many of the pages in this book, and is referred to in most city spreads. Research the particular foods enjoyed in your focus country and culture. [See also **Worksheet 3.**]

**DISCUSSION POINT:** National pastimes are revealed in all of the spreads in this book. Research the favourite national pastimes of your focus country.

**DISCUSSION POINT:** Landmarks are depicted in many of these spreads, eg. the Eiffel Tower in Paris; the Harbour Bridge in Sydney; the Colosseum in Rome. Choose a city in your focus country and research the major landmarks there.

**DISCUSSION POINT:** Architectural styles are depicted in each of the city illustrations. Research the architecture of your focus country.

**DISCUSSION POINT:** National dress is depicted in many of these spreads as well, eg. kimonos in Tokyo, Japan. Research the national dress of your focus country.

**DISCUSSION POINT:** Animals appear in many of the images. What animals are commonly seen in the city streets of your focus country?

**DISCUSSION POINT:** Trees, plants and flowers are also depicted in each of the images. Research the flora of your focus country.

**DISCUSSION POINT:** Religions and beliefs are expressed via festivals and observances, such as Ramadan in Egypt and Holy Week in Mexico. Research the religious beliefs and customs of your focus country.

**DISCUSSION POINT:** Many forms of transport are depicted in these pages. Research the forms of transport most used in your focus country.

## ENGLISH LANGUAGE AND LITERACY

This is relevant to the following Curriculum Area:

<<https://www.australiancurriculum.edu.au/f-10-curriculum/english/>>

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

**ACTIVITY:** Literary devices and rhythmical language are used to make this non-fiction text more enticing, for example, alliteration: 'super storms and twisting tornadoes' (p 3). Find examples of other devices (such as simile) throughout the text of this book.

**ACTIVITY:** Invite students to write the text for a picture book set during a particular season in Australia.

**ACTIVITY:** Read poems about the seasons and discuss the various forms of poetry employed in them. [See **Bibliography.**] Invite students to write a poem about seasons in a selected form.

**ACTIVITY:** Test your students' **comprehension** by asking them questions about the written text. [See also **Author's/Illustrator's Notes** below.] [See also **Worksheets 2. & 3.** below.]

## VISUAL LITERACY

This is relevant to the following Curriculum Area:

<<https://www.australiancurriculum.edu.au/f-10-curriculum/the-arts/visual-arts/>>

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 **front cover** of a book is an important part of its message. This one features many of the images contained within the book. What does the cover suggest to you? Create your own front cover for this book.

**ACTIVITY:** The **endpapers** feature a grid of squares on which objects, animals and plants from the internal pages are depicted. Create your own grid and design alternative endpapers for this book.

**DISCUSSION POINT:** The **title page** depicts a series of buildings with two trees on either side. Each tree is a different colour to denote the seasons. Redesign the title page in your own way.

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

**ACTIVITY:** The **medium or style** employed is drawing and digital art. Read the **Authors/Illustrator's Notes** below. Invite students to create a thumbnail sketch and then trace over it with felt tip pen, and colour in the images, just as Megan McKean describes her technique.

**DISCUSSION POINT:** Each season has a specific **colour** palette. Read the **Authors/Illustrator's Notes** below. Encourage students to pick one and use it in their creative work for this unit.

**DISCUSSION POINT:** Critical Literacy involves looking closely at every page in

a book. There's lots to look at in this book! Go to p 2: What objects do you spot there? Make a list. What season might each of them belong to? (eg. thongs would belong to summer). Note, too, that the objects which appear opposite the text on the introductory spreads for each season can be spotted within the city spreads for that season. Students might have fun trying to spot them all.

**ACTIVITY:** Invite students to observe how picture book artists paint the different seasons. [See **Bibliography.**] Examine images in art galleries as well. Read Kate Ryan's *Van Gogh and the Seasons: an Art Book for Kids Ill.* by Cally Bennett (NGV, 2017) which shows how the seasons are depicted in Van Gogh's work.

**ACTIVITY:** Invite students to draw, paint or collage a scene to accompany the picture book story they wrote above. Create a classroom mural using all the images. [See also **Worksheet 1.** below.]

## CREATIVE ARTS

There are many creative activities suggested by this text:

1. **Make an origami bird.** [See 'How to make an Origami Bird' *Origami Guide* <<https://origami.guide/origami-animals/origami-birds/origami-bird/>>]
2. **Create a butterfly mask** to wear. [See **Worksheet 5.**]
3. **Make a kite.** [See p 56.] [See **Worksheet 6.**]
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/illustrator online. [See **Bibliography.**]

## MATHEMATICS

**ACTIVITY:** Have fun counting things in this text. How many pumpkins are there on the Copenhagen spread (p 39)? How many eggs are there on the Cairo spread (p 11)?

**ACTIVITY:** See **Worksheet 4.** below for mathematics activities.

# FURTHER TOPICS FOR DISCUSSION AND RESEARCH

- Research the work of Megan McKean. Compare this book to her other books.
- Students might research this book in comparison to reading other picture books such as those listed in the **Bibliography**.
- Investigate any other topics not covered in these notes which you consider is suggested by this text.

## CONCLUSION

*Seasons in the City* is a glorious celebration of the changing landscape throughout the world as the seasons unfold each year. Readers will find both information and hours of entertainment in exploring the book's many illustrations, which not only depict the seasons but also the rich diversity of cultures throughout the world.

## AUTHOR/ILLUSTRATOR'S NOTES

### DIGITAL ART

A lot of my work is a combination of off-screen and digital methods. I'll often use a black felt-tip pen to do my drawings, and then apply the colour digitally. In my Hello...! series of books, I would draw a full spread onto an A2 sheet of paper, then have it professionally scanned and shrunk down to the book size, so I could fit in more detail.

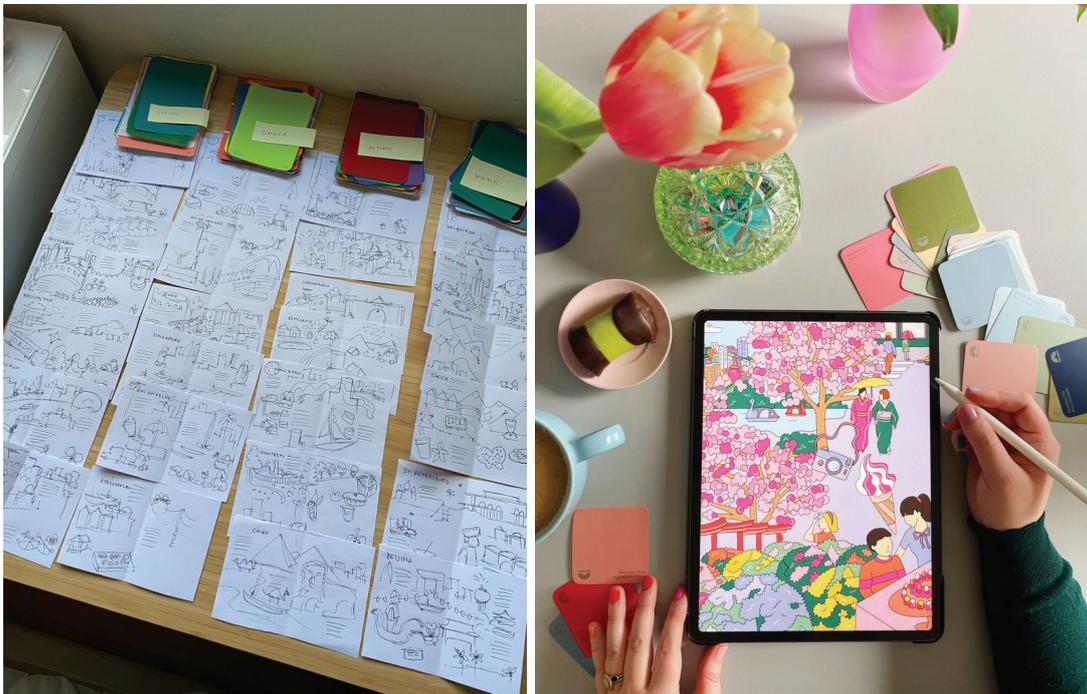
For *Seasons in the City*, I worked entirely digitally, but used a traditionally-inspired 'pen' for my artwork – just like a black felt-tip pen that I'd use on paper – to trace over my pencil sketches. This let me create really detailed pictures that I could zoom into, while also having a lot of control over the colour. If I wanted to change some of the colours, or perhaps I wanted to draw a person with a frowning face instead of a smile, it was much easier to do it digitally by working with lots of layers.

Usually I will do some very rough thumbnail sketches that are really scratchy and messy – it doesn't matter that they don't look very nice, they're just for me to 'think' on the paper, and start to see where different shapes could fit into my composition. From here, I move onto pencil sketches that have a little bit more shape to them, before starting with pen or a black outline as my final piece. Whether I'm working digitally or on paper, the style that I work in is the same. I can usually 'see' the illustration before I start, and have a clear idea of how I want it to look when it's finished before I even start my thumbnail sketches.

## COLOUR PALETTE

This book has a lot of different colours – each season has a unique colour palette. Although there is a ‘blue’ in each season, they vary in tint and tone to better demonstrate the feeling of the relevant season. For example, the blue in summer is a lot brighter and lighter, like the water of the sea or the sky, than the blue in winter, which is a lot deeper and darker, and makes you *feel* cold!

I’ve tried to make the compositions feel balanced in where the colour has been applied. For example, looking at the front cover, how many shades of green can you see? There is the grass green in the spring section, the bright green of the girl’s polka-dot swim-shirt in summer, the olive green on the buildings in autumn, and the forest green on the tree in the winter. Having a little bit of all of these colours in each section helps the eye move around the book cover, and starts to show what each season might feel like.



# ABOUT THE AUTHOR/ILLUSTRATOR

**Megan McKean** is an Australian designer, illustrator and author. Her work is mostly focused on travel and depicting colourful cities from around the world. Megan has worked with companies worldwide, and her work spans digital, print and 3D forms, including her bestselling illustrated books. Megan's illustrations are characterised by the use of bright colour palettes, strong line work and surprising details hidden within each piece, encouraging the viewer to go back for another look to see what they may have missed.

When she's not drawing, Megan is usually dreaming of where to travel next. For more information visit: [www.meganmckean.com](http://www.meganmckean.com)

# WORKSHEETS

## WORKSHEET 1. COLLAGE

Enlarge the collection of illustrations below on a photocopier and pick one or more to collage.

*Illustrations by Megan McKean*



## WORKSHEET 2. SEASON QUIZ

1. What are the two festivals celebrated in Amsterdam in spring?
2. On the right-hand page of the Paris spread, two large images of a popular French pastry are depicted. What is it?
3. A month-long fasting celebration is observed in Egypt. What is it called?
4. Spring in Tokyo is the season of 'hanami'. What does this mean?
5. In Mexico City, spring brings the purple flowering of a beautiful tree. What is it called?
6. In Jaipur, the beginning of spring is marked by the festival known as what?
7. On Midsummer's Eve in Sweden, the sun stays up until how late at night?
8. What famous race starts in Sydney during summer?
9. Where does the Lotus Festival take place in summer?
10. In summer in Rome, the heat can reach what height in temperature?
11. In summer, Singapore celebrates a festival on water. What is it called?
12. The end of summer in Rio de Janeiro is celebrated with what festival?
13. What famous market is mentioned as a source of autumn food produce in London?
14. What spectacular event is part of the Mid-Autumn Festival in Hong Kong?
15. Tivoli amusement park in Copenhagen is decorated in autumn for what festival?
16. How do people warm up in Istanbul during the autumn months?
17. What is the national symbol of Canada, featured on its flag?
18. What amazing sight can be viewed in the sky in autumn in Iceland?
19. Which city in the world is said to have the coldest winter?
20. Queenstown, New Zealand, has a winter festival in which pets participate in an unusual race. What is it?
21. What famous public event occurs in New York in November?
22. What famous global religious festival coincides with winter in Zurich?
23. In St Petersburg the Winter Palace is now known as what?
24. What is the most recognised kite shape made in Beijing?
25. What major pastime takes place in winter in Cape Town?

**Answers:** **1.** The Tulip Festival and King's Day. **2.** Croissant. **3.** Ramadan. **4.** Hanami is the Japanese word for 'flower viewing'. **5.** Jacaranda. **6.** Holi. **7.** 10pm! **8.** Sydney to Hobart Yacht Race. **9.** Echo Park, Los Angeles. **10.** 40-degrees Celsius. **11.** The Dragon Boat Festival. **12.** Carnavale. **13.** Borough Market. **14.** Tai Hang Fire Dragon Dance. **15.** Halloween. **16.** By a trip to the hammam, or bathhouse. **17.** Maple leaf. **18.** The northern lights, also known as the aurora borealis. **19.** The Russian city of Yakutsk experiences the coldest winter on Earth, with the lowest temperature ever recorded being minus 64-degrees Celsius! **20.** Dog Derby, where dogs and their owners compete in a running race down a steep ski field. **21.** Macy's Thanksgiving Day Parade. **22.** Christmas. **23.** State Hermitage Museum. **24.** The Beijing Swallow. **25.** Whale watching.

## WORKSHEET 3. FOOD QUIZ

Describe these food words and then draw an image of them in the third column.

Word	What sort of food is this and where is it from?	Image
1. Tompouce		
2. Baguette		
3. Iftar		
4. Churro		
5. Pavlova		
6. Gelato		
7. Rice dumpling		
8. Mooncake		
9. Baklava		
10. Raclette		

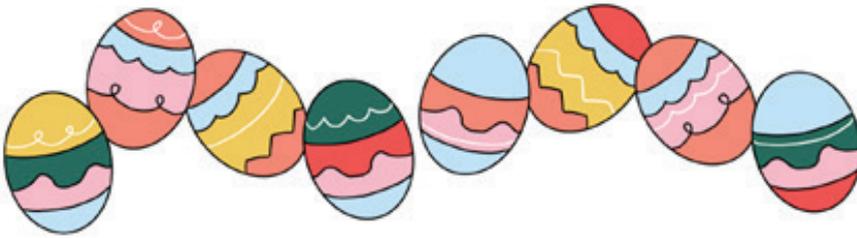
**Answers:** **1.** Cream-filled pastries from the Netherlands. **2.** Bread stick from France. **3.** The special nightly meal that will break the daily fast during Ramadan, observed by Muslims around the world. **4.** A sugary doughnut-like pastry found in Mexico (and also Spain). **5.** Meringue-like dessert topped with whipped cream and fruits in Australia (and also New Zealand). **6.** Delicious frozen dessert sometimes served in cones, from Italy. **7.** Triangular dumplings wrapped in pandan leaves, which come with all sorts of fillings, are depicted here from Singapore. A favourite option is stuffed with water chestnuts, mushrooms and pork. **8.** Chinese pastry traditionally made of lotus seed paste and salted duck egg yolk. **9.** A dessert made with pastry layers filled with nuts and held together with syrup from Turkey. **10.** A dish of cheese over meat and pickles from Switzerland.

## WORKSHEET 4. MATHS QUIZ

Illustrations by Megan McKean



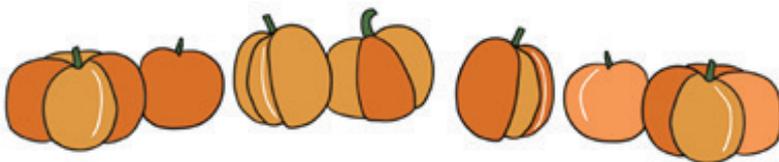
1. How many tulips can you see in this row?



2. If you divide these eight painted eggs by two, how many would you have?



3. Among these nine gelato cones, one is slightly different. Which one?



4. Take three pumpkins from this row of seven pumpkins and how many do you have?



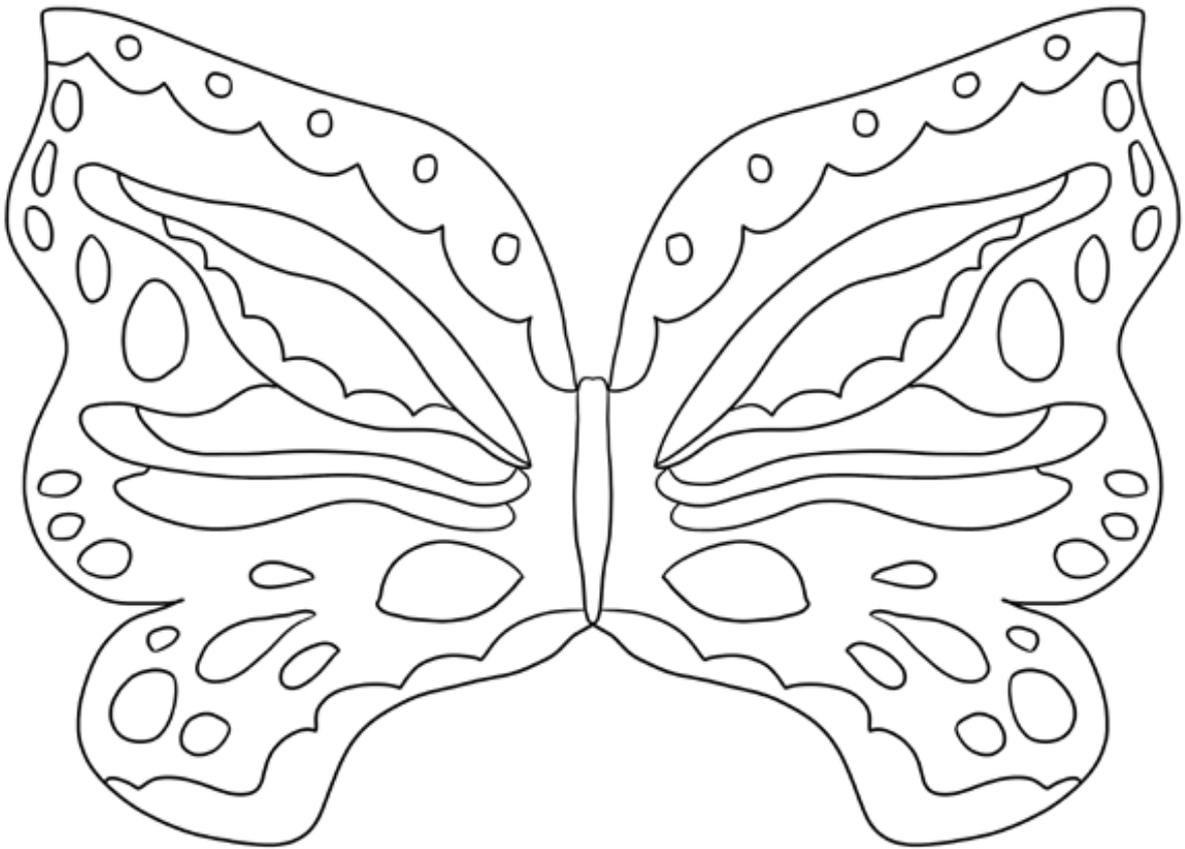
5. In this row of eight maple leaves how many are brown, orange, and red?

**ANSWERS:** 1. Eighteen. 2. Four. 3. The fourth from the right has three scoops of gelato, the others have two scoops. 4. Four pumpkins. 5. Three are brown, two are red, and three are orange.

## **WORKSHEET 5. BUTTERFLY MASK**

*Illustration by Megan McKean*

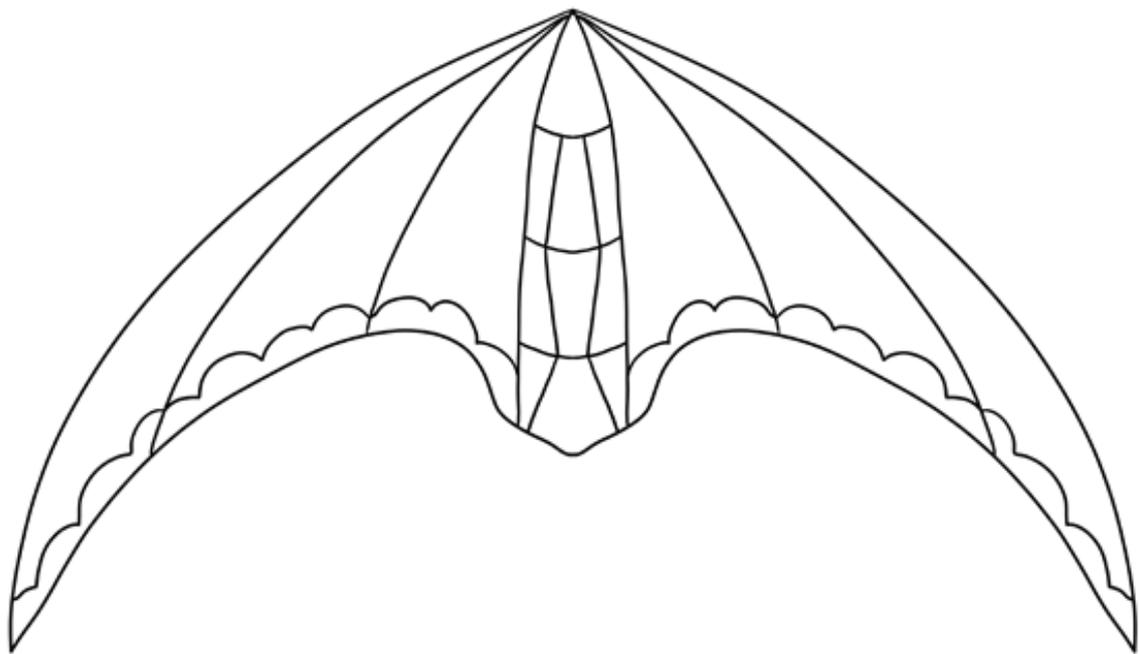
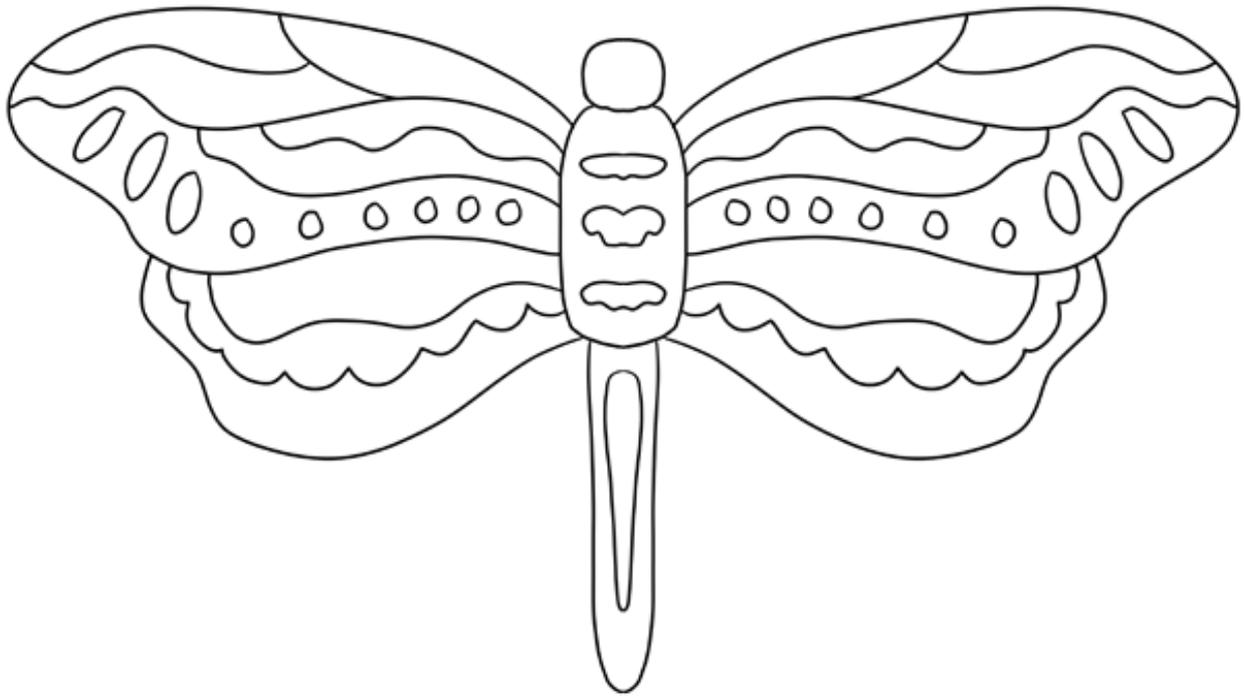
Colour and glue to craft paper and then add elastic to the sides to create a mask.



## WORKSHEET 6. KITE

*Illustration by Megan McKean*

Enlarge the kite templates below on A3 craft paper and cut one out. Colour it in and then add string to fly your kite.



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## ABOUT THE AUTHOR OF THE NOTES

**Dr Robyn Sheahan-Bright AM** 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 QWC's Johnno Award. In 2021 she was appointed a Member of the Order of Australia.