



Back to school marks a fresh start, new challenges, and a whole year of growth ahead!

This August, we're kicking off things with a time capsule of your own.

In these activities, you'll capture who you are right now, including your interests, your personality, and your dreams for the year ahead. You'll set meaningful goals, explore strategies for managing stress, and create a time capsule to reopen at the end of the school year. Get ready to look back and reflect on how much you've grown!

This packet includes...

- "Time Capsules" Reading Activity
- "Create Your Own Time Capsule" Activity
- "Pieces of Me" Activity
- "Letter to Your Future Self" Writing Activity
- "Self-Portrait" Creative Activity
- "Solve a Back-to-School Joke" Activity
- "Build Your Calm Kit" Creative Activity
- "Motto Cube" Activity
- "Back-to-School Word Search" Activity
- "Math About Me" Activity

Explore More

Keep the reflection going with these activities that help you explore the people, memories, and experiences that have helped shape who you are.



Collaborate with a family member to assemble a family time capsule, curating photos, letters, and meaningful keepsakes that capture this moment in time. Agree on a future date to reopen it and reflect on how things have changed.



Conduct an interview with an older relative or neighbor, such as a parent, grandparent, or family friend, about what their life was like at your current age. Ask about their interests, challenges, and aspirations at the time, then analyze the similarities and differences between their experiences and your own.



Explore your personal history by reviewing old photos or talking with a family member about your preferences and personality as a young child. Consider what has changed over time and what has stayed the same, then reflect on how you've developed and grown.



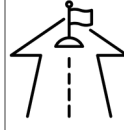
Directions: Read about time capsules, then design and fill your own using the template and planning table on the following pages!

Time Capsule Basics



What Is a Time Capsule?

A time capsule is a container filled with objects or messages. People seal it shut and save it to open later, sometimes many years in the future. It shows what life was like at the time it was made.



Why Make One?

Making a time capsule is a fun way to remember this exact time in your life. When you open it later, you'll get to see how things have changed and how much you have grown!

Spotlight: America's Time Capsule



On July 4, 2026, a new time capsule was sealed to mark the 250th anniversary of the Declaration of Independence. Instead of a plain box, it's shaped like a smooth metal cylinder. Scientists and history experts engineered it to survive underground for 250 years. It holds letters and items from U.S. government leaders, all 50 states and six territories, and everyday people. It also includes cultural items and submissions from students, all showing what life is like in America today. The capsule was buried at Independence National Historical Park in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, and won't be opened again until 2276, when the country turns 500 years old.

"NIST-A250-Time-Capsule-003," National Institute of Standards and Technology, Public Domain, <https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:NIST-A250-Time-Capsule-003.jpg>

Fun Facts About Time Capsules!



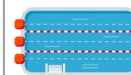
The term "time capsule" was coined for the 1939

New York World's Fair.

The creator originally named it a "time bomb" but changed it because that sounded too much like a weapon.



Not every time capsule stays on Earth. NASA attached matching gold records to its **Voyager 1 and 2** spacecraft, carrying sounds and pictures of life on Earth into space in case anyone ever finds them.



Oglethorpe University built a giant time capsule called the **"Crypt of Civilization"** inside an old swimming pool in 1940. It's considered the largest time capsule in the world, and it won't be opened until the year 8113.



Directions:

1. Choose a sealable container, such as a Pringles can, a jar, or a shoebox.
2. Color or decorate the template on the next page. Pick an “Open On” date and write it on the template. This can be one year from today or any time you choose.
3. Glue or tape the template onto your capsule. You might wrap it around the capsule or put it on the lid.
4. Decide what to put inside using the planning table below. Avoid food, since it can spoil over time.
5. Place your items inside the container.
6. Seal your capsule (tape the lid, close the jar, or close the box) and store it somewhere safe until it’s time to open it.

Planning Table:

Fill in one item per category, with a short phrase (not a sentence) for your reasoning.

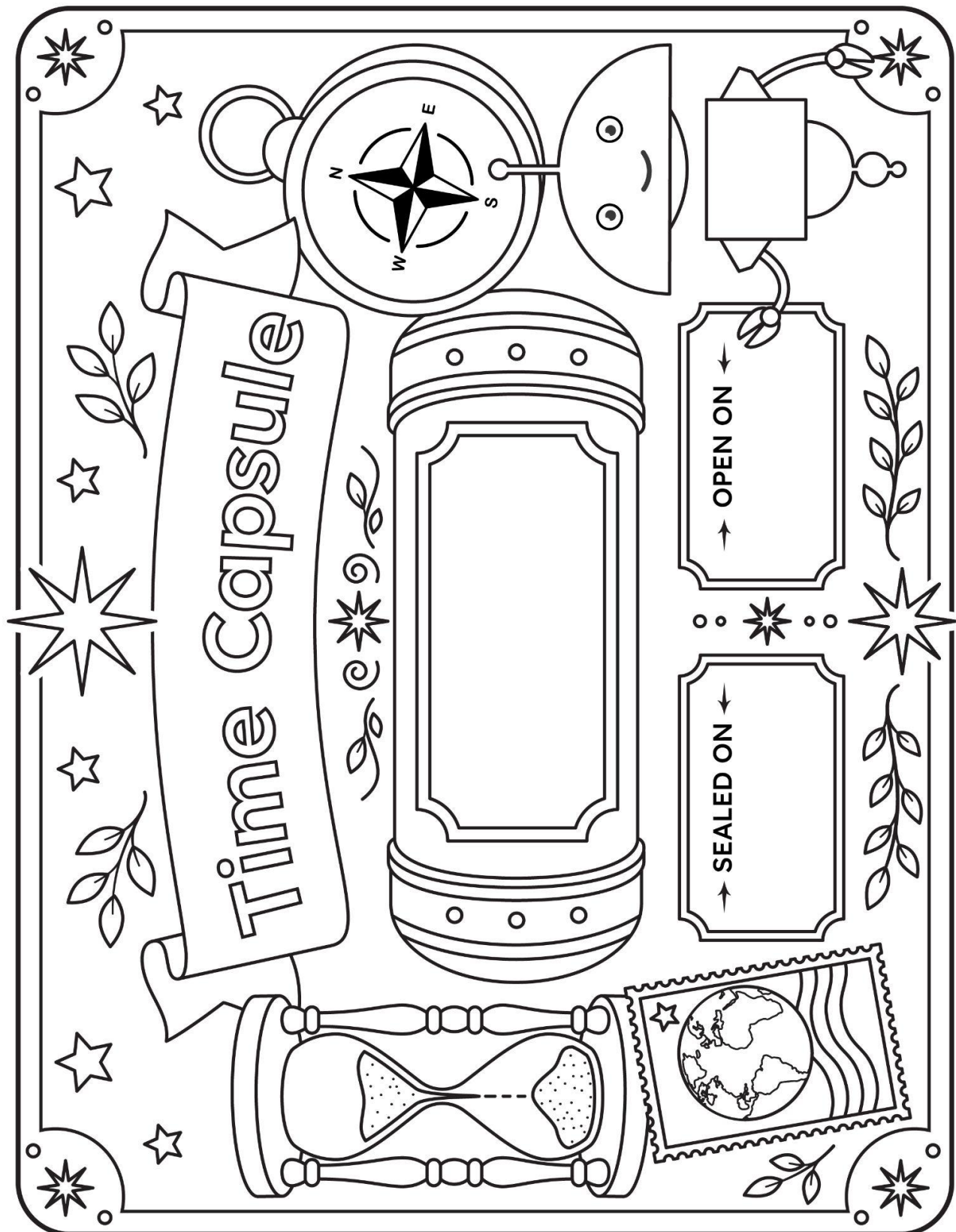
What Will You Include?

Category	Item	Why it matters
A personal object	Example: My soccer trophy	Example: Shows what I am most proud of this year
Something that represents your culture/family		
A prediction for this school year		
A message to the future (Tip: Consider using the “Letter to Your Future Self” from this packet)		



Activity
Create Your Own Time Capsule

Back to School 2026
6-8 Activities





Directions: Our favorites can tell a story about who we are, what matters to us, and what makes our days better. Some things may change in the future, and that's OK! This page is **for you right now**. Take your time and fill in each puzzle piece with words or drawings.

Pieces of Me		
Favorite Music or Artist 	Favorite Book or Series	Favorite Movie or Show 
Favorite Memory	Favorite Hobby 	Favorite Subject
Favorite Food or Snack 	Favorite Way To Relax	Favorite App or Website 

You are one of a kind. Don't forget to celebrate what makes you, *YOU!*

Continue to next page 



More About Me

Directions: Everyone is unique! Think about what makes you, *you*. Write or circle your answers to share more about yourself.

Three Words That Describe You



A Quote or Motto That Means a Lot to You



If You Could Have Dinner With Anyone...

Who would it be and what would you ask them?



Would You Rather...?

Circle your choice.



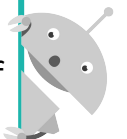
- Mountains **or** Beach
- Dogs **or** Cats
- Pizza **or** Tacos
- Book **or** Movie
- Summer **or** Winter
- Sweet **or** Salty
- City **or** Nature

Something You're Proud Of



Did You Know?

Thinking about the things you love and care about can boost your mood, build confidence, and help you understand yourself better. Keep being you!





Writing Activity

Letter to Your Future Self

Back to School 2026
6-8 Activities

In this activity, you'll write a letter to your future self to come back to at the end of the school year or when you open your time capsule (from Page 3).

Directions:

1. Read the letter below that Mia wrote to Mia's future self for inspiration.
2. Prepare your letter.
 - ☐ On the template on the next page, fill in the blanks by writing, drawing, or using another way that works best for you.
 - ☐ Fold your letter and seal it. You might use tape or an envelope.
 - ☐ Save it in a safe place, or add it to your time capsule.
 - ☐ Set your own reminder (phone, calendar, planner) to read it on the last day of school or when you open your time capsule.
3. When you read it later, reflect on how much you've changed and how well you met your goal.

Dear Future Me,

This school year, I am looking forward to making new friends, and

I have a goal to finish my lessons for the day before I play games.

This goal matters to me because when I put things off, I end up rushing, and that makes me feel stressed.

I'm going to work toward this goal by (describe what you will do and how often) starting my lessons in the morning and checking them off as I finish.

I will know I'm making progress when I finish my lessons for the day in the afternoon and am less stressed.

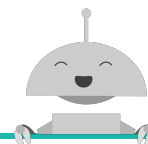
If I get off track, I can ask for help from my mom or my older sister.

One thing I want to remember about who I am right now is that I am learning how to manage my own time, and that's an important skill.

I predict that by the end of the year, I will be able to plan my time by myself.

Love,

Me





Writing Activity

Letter to Your Future Self

Back to School 2026
6-8 Activities

Dear Future Me,

This school year, I am looking forward to _____, and

I have a goal to _____

_____.

This goal matters to me because _____

_____.

I'm going to work toward this goal by (describe what you will do and how often) _____

_____.

I will know I'm making progress when _____

_____.

If I get off track, I can ask for help from _____.

One thing I want to remember about who I am right now is _____

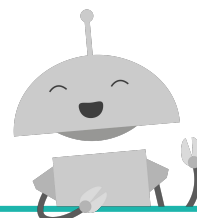
_____.

I predict that by the end of the year. I will _____

_____.

Love,

Me





Directions: Draw a self-portrait in the middle box. Use the boxes in the frame to tell more about who you are by writing or drawing a picture!

Something I like to do	What I like to be called	My favorite food
Something I'm really good at		My favorite color
Something I'd like to do when I'm older		My favorite music
	The best thing about me	

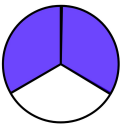


Activity Solve a Back-to-School Joke

Back to School 2026
6-8 Activities

Directions: August 16th is National Joke Day! Answer the questions below and use the key to find the answer to the joke!

What fraction does this show? **U**



Simplify this fraction **L**

$$\frac{10}{12} = \frac{\text{ }{\text{ }}}$$

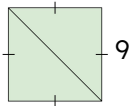
Solve this fraction addition problem **R**

$$\frac{6}{10} + \frac{1}{10} = \text{--}$$

What is the area of this rectangle? **E**



What is the perimeter of this square? **P**



How many degrees is this angle? **B**



Solve the equation below. **S**

$$31 = a - 14$$

$a = \text{--}$

Solve the equation below. **L**

$$95 = p + 47$$

$p = \text{--}$

Solve the equation below. **L**

$$4x = 36$$

$x = \text{--}$

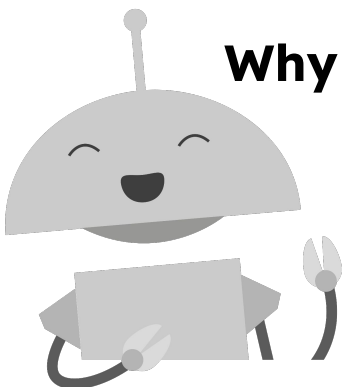
Solve **F**

$$\begin{array}{r} 50 \\ \times 74 \\ \hline \end{array}$$

Solve **O**

$$\begin{array}{r} 58 \\ \times 46 \\ \hline \end{array}$$

Solve **M**

$$\begin{array}{r} 42 \\ \times 39 \\ \hline \end{array}$$


Why did the math assignment always look sad?

He was $\frac{\text{--}}{3,700}$ $\frac{2}{3}$ $\frac{5}{6}$ $\frac{\text{--}}{48}$ of

$\frac{\text{--}}{36}$ $\frac{7}{10}$ $\frac{\text{--}}{2,668}$ $\frac{\text{--}}{90}$ $\frac{\text{--}}{9}$ $\frac{\text{--}}{30}$ $\frac{\text{--}}{1,638}$ $\frac{\text{--}}{45}$



New classes, new goals, and new challenges can bring big emotions. You might feel excited one day and overwhelmed the next. That's completely normal! In this activity, you'll make a tool to help you regulate your feelings.

Build Your Own Calm-Down Bottle

A **calm-down bottle** is a simple mindfulness tool. Watching the glitter slowly settle reminds you to pause, breathe, and give your thoughts time to settle before reacting.



You will need...

- ☐ A clear plastic bottle or jar with lid
- ☐ Water
- ☐ Clear glue or glitter glue
- ☐ Glitter
- ☐ Food coloring (optional)
- ☐ Sequins, beads, or small charms
- ☐ An adult helper

Directions:

1. Fill your bottle about three-fourths full with warm water.
2. Add two to four spoonfuls of glue to the bottle.
3. Sprinkle in glitter and any other beads or charms you'd like.
4. Add a drop or two of food coloring if you'd like.
5. Ask an adult to put the lid on tightly. They may glue the lid shut for extra safety.
6. Gently shake the bottle, set it down, and watch the glitter settle.
7. Take slow, deep breaths while you wait!

Use your calm-down bottle whenever you need a reset, like before a test, a big game, a tough conversation, or anytime stress builds up.



My Stress Signals

Directions: What does stress look like for you? Check all that apply.

- | | | |
|---|--|---------------------------------|
| ☐ I overthink. | ☐ I lose focus. | ☐ Other: |
| ☐ I procrastinate. | ☐ I get quiet. | |
| ☐ I get frustrated easily. | ☐ I feel nervous. | |
| ☐ I have trouble sleeping. | ☐ I feel overwhelmed. | |

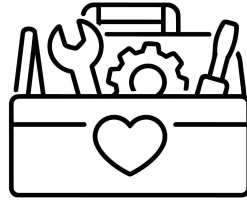
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Activity Build Your Calm Kit

Back to School 2026
6-8 Activities

Everyone experiences stress sometimes. Having healthy coping strategies can help you manage big emotions, stay focused, and feel your best.

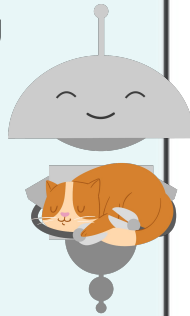


What is a Coping Strategy?

A coping strategy is something you can do to handle stress, calm down, or refocus when life feels overwhelming.

Examples of Coping Strategies

- Stretching
- Playing a sport
- Creating art
- Playing with a pet
- Baking or cooking
- Spending time outside



Build Your Toolbox

Directions: The strategies above are just a few ideas. What helps YOU reset, relax, or refocus? Brainstorm a few ideas below.

How Helpful Are These Strategies for You?

Directions: Rate each coping strategy from 1-5 based on how helpful you think it would be for you.

Rating Key

1 = not very well, 5 = very well



Take slow, deep breaths

1 2 3 4 5



Listen to music

1 2 3 4 5



Take a walk or stretch

1 2 3 4 5



Talk to someone you trust

1 2 3 4 5



Read, draw, or journal

1 2 3 4 5



Did You Know?

When you use healthy coping strategies, you train your brain to handle challenges in a positive way.



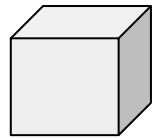
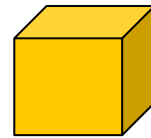
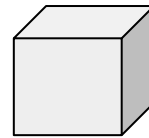
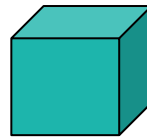
A motto is a short phrase or statement you return to when you need focus, grounding, or motivation.

Directions:

1. Print the motto cube net on the next page.
2. Answer each prompt on the cube net with words or pictures. Use the bullets below for extra ideas and support.
3. Cut, fold, and glue or tape the tabs to create your motto cube.

Materials:

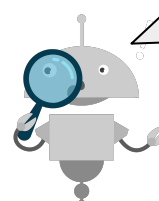
- Motto cube net (next page)
- Scissors
- Glue stick or tape
- Markers, pens, or colored pencils



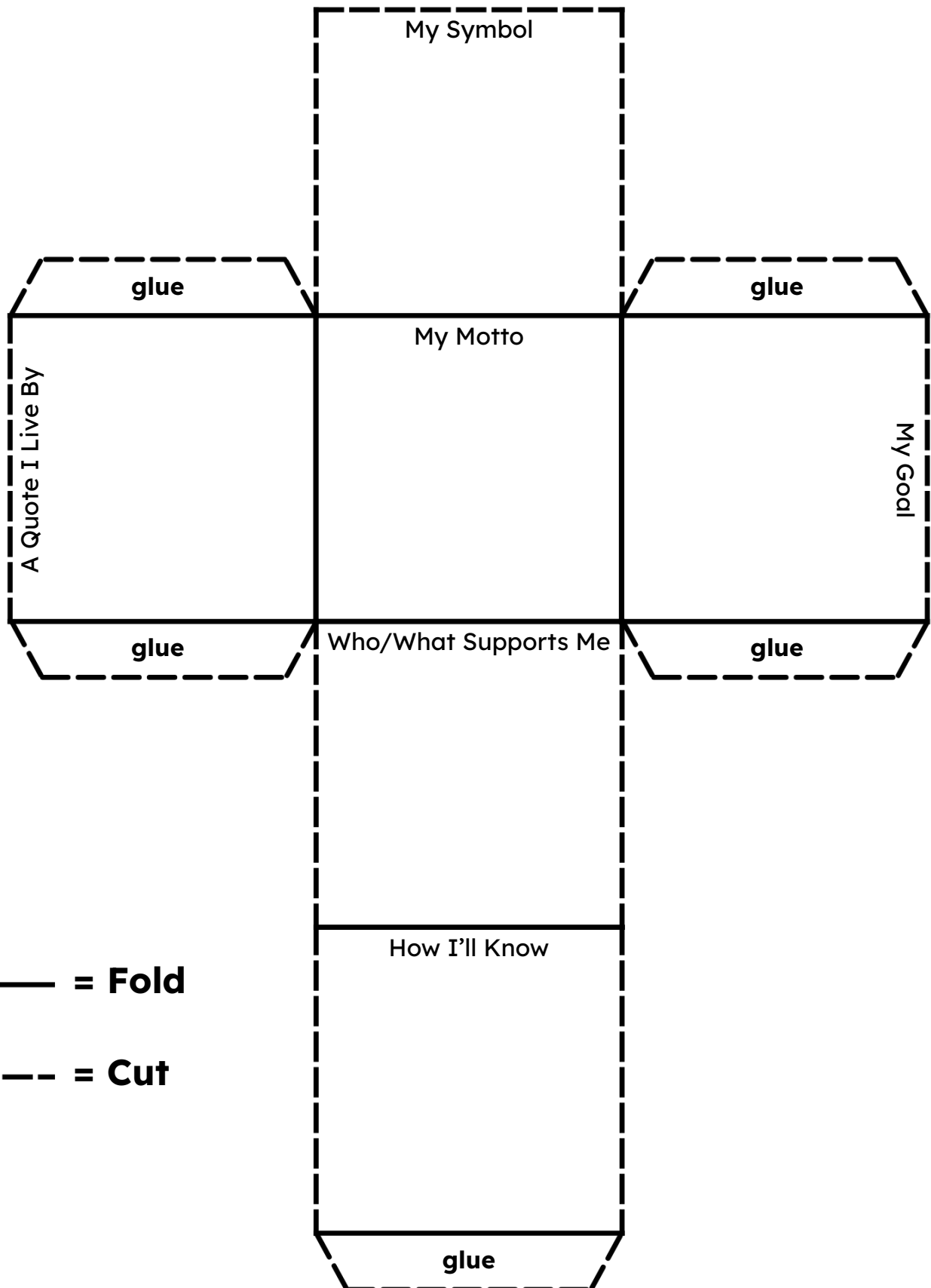
Panel Prompts:

1. **My Motto:** Write a short phrase you want to live by this year. A good motto is short, positive, and easy to repeat to yourself. Here are a few examples:
“Progress, not perfection.” “I can do hard things.” “Mistakes help me grow.”
2. **My Symbol:** Draw a small picture or symbol that represents your motto. What image comes to mind when you think about it?
3. **My Goal:** Write one goal you have for this school year. Need a starting point? Try one of these:
“This year, I want to get better at ____.” “By the end of this year, I want to ____.”
4. **A Quote To Live By:** Share a quote you’ve heard somewhere, like from a book, song, movie, or a person you know, that you really connect with. (This is different from your motto in Panel 1: It’s something someone else said, not your own words.)
5. **Who/What Supports Me:** Who or what helps you when things get tough? This could be a person, place, or thing that helps you follow through on your motto.
6. **How I’ll Know:** How will you know you’re putting your motto into practice? Give one example of what that might look like in everyday life.

Keep It Visible: Now that your cube is built, pick a spot where you’ll see it every day, like your desk or nightstand. Seeing your motto often helps it stick in your mind, so when things get busy or hard, you won’t have to search for it.



Motto comes from the Latin word “muttere,” meaning “to mutter.” In Italian, it became the word for a saying attached to a family crest.



—— = **Fold**

---- = **Cut**



Activity Back-to-School Word Search

Back to School 2026
6-8 Activities

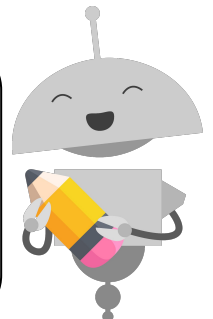
D	P	S	W	C	E	S	T	M	Y	L	X	J	L	Q
A	L	R	A	A	U	A	Y	E	R	A	S	E	R	E
E	I	X	O	B	V	A	S	R	O	S	S	I	C	S
R	W	G	J	J	S	U	R	P	E	F	D	P	X	P
V	E	E	I	S	E	E	I	S	E	M	E	B	F	V
L	C	X	E	K	N	C	S	C	G	N	A	U	D	S
T	Q	Z	P	N	E	N	T	I	U	S	C	T	I	U
K	G	U	A	D	O	T	S	E	V	C	W	I	H	O
H	L	L	Z	S	M	T	H	N	Y	H	D	I	L	I
Y	P	M	S	R	U	I	L	C	B	E	U	K	H	R
M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

science
scissors
project
pencil

write
history
marker
subject

math
read
lessons
eraser

schedule
study
curious
planner





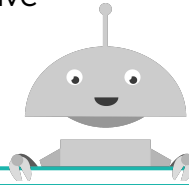
Directions: Answer each prompt with a number about yourself. Then, use each given math challenge to practice your skills!

Example: My Age

Write an equation with a variable to solve for your number.

My number is 12.

Show it: $x - 4 = 8$



Challenge!

Pick one box and show your number four ways.

Use an expression, equation, ratio, percent, or exponent.

Math About Me

1 My Age

My number is _____.

Write an equation with a variable to solve for your number.



2 First and Last Name

My numbers are _____ and _____.

Write a ratio of first-name letters to last-name letters.



3 Books I Want To Read This Year

My number is _____.

Triple your number.



4 My Age 2 Years Ago

My numbers are _____ and _____.

Write three multiples of your number.



5 Pets I Have or Wish I Had

My number is _____.

Write a multiplication or division problem that equals your number.



6 Birth Month (1-12) + My Age

My numbers are _____ and _____.
(birth month + age)³



7 My Favorite Number

My number is _____.

Triple your number.



8 Number of New Things I Want To Learn This Year.

My number is _____.

Find 16% of your number.

