

clutterbugs

MAURA PIERLOT & MAYA BORA



TEACHER NOTES

Teacher notes by Romi Sharp



CLUTTERBUGS

Creators: Maura Pierlot & Maya Bora

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About the Book

Join the quirky clutterbugs on a zany adventure that inspires responsibility, environmental awareness and creativity, while exploring the true meaning of friendship and gift-giving.

When Steff can't find Jay's birthday present in her very messy room, strange creatures called clutterbugs come to the rescue, helping her discover the most meaningful gift of all.

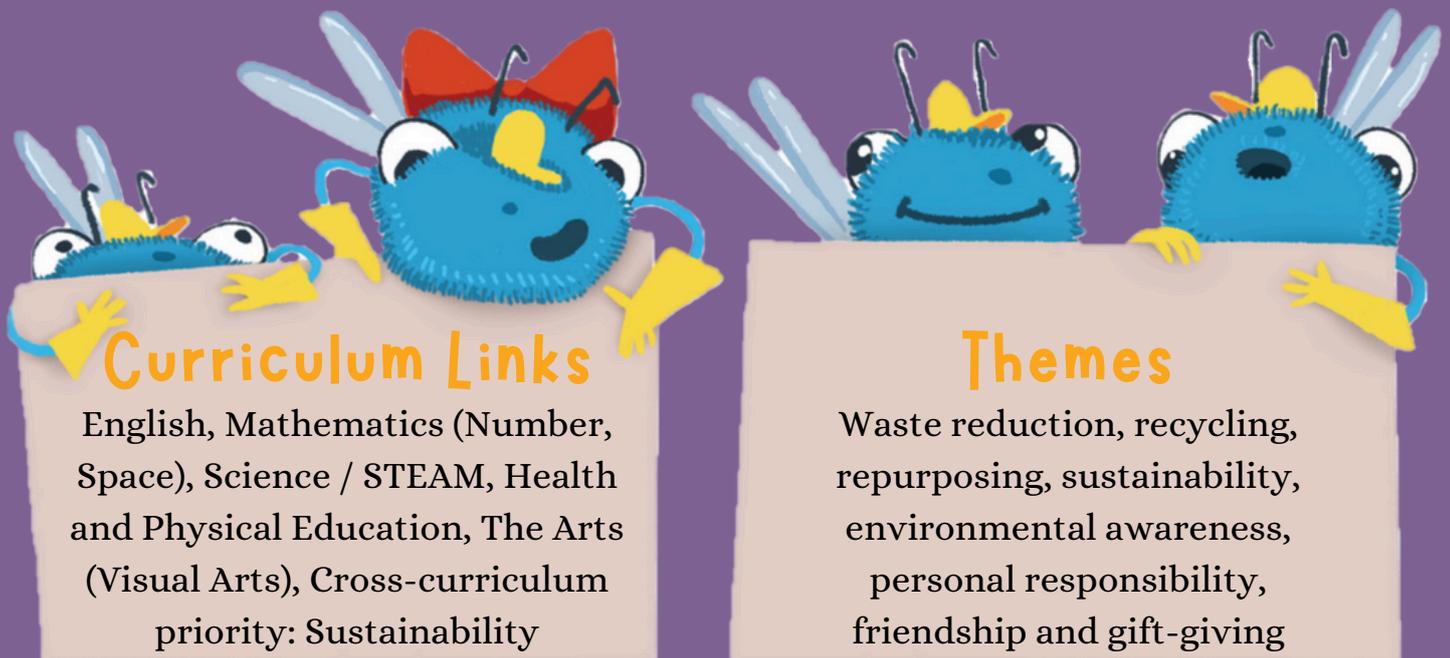
About the Creators

Maura Pierlot is an international award-winning children's book author, playwright and filmmaker who creates on Ngunnawal / Ngambri country (Canberra). Her writing explores existential themes, prompting vital conversations about identity, mental wellbeing and the complexities of the human experience.

Find Maura at her website: <https://maurapierlot.com> and on Instagram and Facebook @maurapierlot_author.

Born in Bodrum, Turkey, Maya Bora has earned recognition and awards in the realms of cartoon, painting, illustration, graphic design, and game design, both nationally and internationally. Her illustrative work spans children's books, comics, and editorial art for various publishers and companies, with ten books published to date. She founded Megami, a creative studio, and developed Okku, a mobile app dedicated to the creation and publishing of digital books. Additionally, she designed and launched Shishkebob, a unique puzzle game. Currently, she serves as the partner and art director at Blay Games, while also working as a freelance illustrator for children's books.

Find Maya on Instagram and Facebook @mayabora.



Curriculum Links

English, Mathematics (Number, Space), Science / STEAM, Health and Physical Education, The Arts (Visual Arts), Cross-curriculum priority: Sustainability

Themes

Waste reduction, recycling, repurposing, sustainability, environmental awareness, personal responsibility, friendship and gift-giving

Teacher Notes

BEFORE READING -

Tuning in: Show students some used, clean household items (or pictures of items) that could be sorted into categories; KEEP, TOSS, REUSE or RECYCLE. Use separate tubs, or draw a table for students to decide which category each item fits in. Some items might include: old socks or shoes, paper rolls/tubes, a vase or gardening pot, picture frame, toys, sporting equipment, clothing/towels, etc.

Ask students to discuss their reasoning behind their choices. Discuss the difference between 'wants' and 'needs'. Is it important to own a lot of things? Why or why not?

Did the activity prompt students to think about: Being more creative? Being more mindful of their shopping habits? Their responsibility for their belongings? Their responsibility for the environment? Why are these important?

Look at the cover of 'Clutterbugs'. What do you notice about the cover that might tell you about the characters' problem?

- What inferences can you make from the title?
- How do you think the characters might feel in the story? Why? How does this cover make you feel?
- Do you think this book will be helpful? How?

DURING READING -

- On the first page, how do you think Steff feels when she realises her room is too messy?
- How has her messy room caused a problem, considering it is Jay's birthday? What do you think Steff should do?
- What do you think the clutterbugs will help Steff with? Would you like clutterbugs to sort through your things?
- (Spread 18-19) What kinds of things can you see in the piles? Do you think they've done a good job of sorting the items? (The 'Toss' pile is biggest) What can you see in the 'Recycle' pile?
- What do you think of Steff's idea to make Jay a homemade gift?
- What have the clutterbugs and Pierre done in Steff's room at the end? What does 'repurposing' mean? Did you spot Pierre throughout the story? What were the clues as to what he was doing?
- What did you think of the ending to this story? Was it expected or were you surprised? How do you feel about it?



AFTER READING -

- What is the story about? What is the main idea? How did it make you feel? Do you have a part that you relate to or enjoyed the most?
- What did you learn about Steff and how she felt about having to sort through her mess? Did her feelings about her belongings change by the end of the story? How?
- What did you learn about the clutterbugs? In what ways were they helpful? Were they 'unhelpful' in any ways? How would you feel about them in your space?
- How does this story empower us to consider being more responsible for the ways we manage our belongings and how we can be more mindful of how much we buy and its effects on the environment?
- Find out the meaning of the term 'sustainability'.
- In what ways can we reduce the amount of rubbish being wasted?
- What is 'consumerism'? Discuss its implications.
- What are the benefits of recycling and repurposing? How did both Steff and Pierre repurpose items in the story? How were they creative?
- What did you learn about giving gifts? How did Jay feel about the gift from Steff? Do you like to create your own gifts for your family and friends?
- How can you describe the language used by the author? Notice the story is written in rhyme. Why has the author used this writing technique?

- What do you like about the illustrations? What do you notice about Steff's facial expressions and body language throughout the story? Can you describe her feelings? How does the illustrator use colour and perspective to highlight the emotions and focus points? What media has the illustrator used?
- What did you find most surprising / interesting / impactful / enjoyable about this story?
- What are some positive strategies you could use if you wanted to make a change for yourself or for others? Turn and talk to a friend about it.
- What do you think the clutterbugs will do next?

ACTIVITIES

ENGLISH -

Vocabulary: Spelling – 'Cc' or 'cl' for 'clutterbugs'

[AC9EFLY10](#) [AC9EFLY12](#) [AC9EFLY13](#) [AC9EFLY14](#)
[AC9E1LY11](#) [AC9E1LY13](#) [AC9E1LY14](#) [AC9E2LY09](#)
[AC9E2LY10](#) [AC9E2LY11](#)

Identify phonemes and practise spelling 'clutterbugs' and other words beginning with 'c' or 'cl', in varying techniques and formats. Write a list of common 'c' words, recognising the different sounds the initial 'c' makes. For example, the 'c' in clutterbugs sounds different to the 'c' in cellophane.

Students can:

- Say the words out loud.
- Clap the syllables in each word.
- Write the words broken up by syllables. Eg. cl/u/tt/er/b/u/g/s.
- Write some words in alphabetical or length order.
- Find hidden words within 'clutterbugs', like the 'clutter', 'utter', 'bug', 'bugs'.

- Write the words with different media (pencils, crayons, or invisible ink, etc) or make them with natural or household materials, such as twigs, leaves, written in sand, stones, bottle lids, buttons, etc.
- See below for a rocket or clutterbug template to write words in and around.

Vocabulary: Nouns, Verbs, Adjectives

[AC9EFLA08](#) [AC9E1LA07](#) [AC9E2LA07](#) [AC9EFLY13](#)

Locate in the book the nouns, verbs and adjectives relating to Steff's situation and the actions / descriptions of the characters.

Students could sort the words into the columns.

Nouns: (*Steff, Pierre, Sunday* – Proper Nouns) *room, floor, slippers, stuff, drool, birthday, party, gift, toy rocket, knee, creature, clutterbug, mess, pants, broom, heap, tube, string, pup, hound, etc.*

Verbs: *find, digging, dripping, forgotten, searched, bought, buzzing, tickle, flashed, crisscrossed, snatched, sweep, keep, toss, recycle, choose, wrapped, blinking, vanish, repurposing, etc.*

Adjectives: *messy, muffled, stylish, cool, high, low, weird, soft, good, absurd, boring, bare, cluttered, mountainous, old, new, elated, bewildered, strange, expert, etc.*

Students could add to these lists and create sentences including some of these terms. Illustrate sentences with pictures of Steff, Pierre and the clutterbugs, or themselves when they may have decluttered their room or made a gift for someone special.

Vocabulary: Literary Device - Rhyme

[AC9EFLE04](#) [AC9E1LE04](#) [AC9E2LE04](#) [AC9EFLY09](#) [AC9E1LY09](#) [AC9E1LY10](#) [AC9E2LY09](#) [AC9E2LY10](#) [AC9E2LY11](#)

Clutterbugs is written in rhyming couplets to add to the engagement of language. Students can:

- Find and list the examples of various rhyming pairs. Can you add your own to these with the same spelling pattern?

For example, for 'cool / drool' – 'tool', 'stool', 'pool', 'fool'. With a different spelling pattern – 'cruel', 'ghoul', 'gruel', 'tulle', 'yule'.

- What do you notice about the patterns of the spelling and sounds?
- Discuss and write the meanings of various terms and illustrate.
- Write a rhyming message or poem about your favourite homemade gift, a recycling experience, or the clutterbugs.
- Write an acrostic poem with the letters; C-L-U-T-T-E-R-B-U-G-S.
- Write a birthday card for a friend, written in rhyming couplets!

Comprehension

[AC9EFLE01](#) [AC9EFLE02](#) [AC9E1LE02](#) [AC9E2LE02](#)

[AC9EFLE05](#) [AC9E1LE05](#) [AC9E2LE05](#) [AC9EFLY05](#)

[AC9E1LY05](#) [AC9E2LY05](#)

[Cross-curriculum priorities – Sustainability: SS2 SS3 SW2](#)

Ask students to think about the text and how this connects to what they know. Answer and write about the following questions...

Text-to-Self: What are some aspects in the story, *Clutterbugs*, that you can relate to in your own life? Do you like tidying your room, making a mess, creating homemade gifts, attending birthday parties? Have you ever made a change in your home or community, or invited people to an event? What happened? What strategies helped you?

Text-to-Text: Compare aspects of the story to those in another similar text, such as a different book (fiction or non-fiction) about decluttering, repurposing or recycling, consumerism, or insects, or texts relating to empowering changes or sustainability.

Text-to-World: Find out about local special events or community programs that inform and celebrate recycling or repurposing (eg. to make art). What does the community and local council do to help people come together and to create a better world? Do you have a local recycling centre? Have you been to visit? What can you do in your home to help the environment?

Activity ideas:

- Write a poem, letter or invitation to your family, friends and/or neighbours to invite them to a special event, such as a birthday or an ‘upcycling’ party.
- Following your visit to the recycling centre, create a poster or online brochure to inform others on best sustainable practices, and the benefits of the centre and where to find it.
- Write a plan for your school to engage in positive environmental activities.

Narrative Writing

[AC9EFLE01](#) [AC9EFLE02](#) [AC9E1LE02](#) [AC9E2LE02](#)
[AC9E1LY01](#) [AC9E2LY01](#) [AC9EFLY06](#) [AC9E1LY06](#)
[AC9E2LY06](#)

Students can write a narrative story based around the idea; ‘*I love mess...*’, or about a character who needs to find a resourceful alternative when things don’t go to plan. This could be heartfelt or funny, from the perspective of a child or clutterbug (or another character).

Ask students to think about who their characters are, and what might be the conflict or problem to solve. What events or situations might be experienced (real or imagined)? What is the tone of the story? Will it be written in first or third person? Will it be written in rhyme or prose? What personal emotional or physical challenges might need to be overcome? How will they be resolved?

Begin your narrative with a sizzling start, such as dialogue, onomatopoeia, action or scene setting. Think about using interesting figurative and emotive language.

Set it out with a beginning, middle and end.

Procedural Text

[AC9E1LA03](#) [AC9E2LA03](#) [AC9E1LA09](#) [AC9E1LE02](#)
[AC9EFLY01](#) [AC9E1LY01](#) [AC9E2LY01](#) [AC9EFLY03](#)
[AC9E1LY03](#) [AC9E2LY03](#) [AC9EFLY07](#) [AC9E1LY06](#)
[AC9E1LY07](#) [AC9E2LY06](#) [AC9E2LY07](#)

Steff created her own toy rocket for Jay for his birthday. Students can write and share a procedural text on how to make a toy rocket, a kite or another chosen recycled toy or craft.

Students need to understand the structure and format of procedural texts, including: materials needed, an introductory paragraph about the text, paragraphs or points describing each step in the process, and a summary / conclusion with additional tips.

Examples of art and craft ideas can be found below in ‘Science/STEAM’ and ‘Visual Arts’.

VISUAL LITERACY -

English links: [AC9E2LA08](#) [AC9EFLE01](#) [AC9E2LE02](#)
Visual Arts: [AC9AVAFD01](#) [AC9AVA2D01](#) [AC9AVAFD01](#)
[AC9AVA2C01](#) [AC9AVAFP01](#) [AC9AVA2P01](#)

Through the illustrations, we can learn more about Steff’s emotions by her facial expressions and body language. There are also other visual clues that tell us more than the text alone, including signs, symbols, letters and pictures, other details in her bedroom, the clues from Pierre, and even the different visual perspectives.

- What words would students use to describe Steff’s various emotions?
- What is happening in the pictures when she is feeling happy, curious, confused, worried, hopeful, considered, inspired, satisfied, etc?
- How do the colours, textures, patterns and perspectives drawn by the illustrator reflect the feelings and the pro-active energy, as well as the scenes of chaos versus calm?

With an understanding of the visual literacy represented in *Clutterbugs*, students can create their own expanding book (like a stretching accordion) showing the sequence of events. Students might like to add some onomatopoeia for effect, such as ‘RUFF RUFF’, ‘BUZZ’, ‘SNATCH’, ‘BOING!’, ‘ZING!’ etc.

Assess students’ ability to express and sequence a narrative, express emotion, be concise, and include illustrations and layouts that focus on effective composition and arrangement.

MATHEMATICS -

Clutterbugs Location and Prepositions

Space: [AC9MFSP02](#) [AC9M1SP02](#) [AC9M2SP02](#)

Using real or pictures of household items or those seen in the book, students follow instructions to position the pieces in a location using prepositional language such as, ‘the slippers are **on** the pile’, ‘the racquet is **next to** the skateboard’, ‘Pierre is **in** the mess’, ‘the teddy is **behind** the pillow’, ‘the rocket is **under** the mountainous heap’, ‘the clutterbug is at the **top of** Steff’s knee’, ‘the clutterbugs walked **across** the floor’, ‘the pad is **above** the box’, ‘the bottle is **below** the chair’, and so on.

Extension: Create a map / floorplan (on grid paper) of Steff’s room, including her bed, shelves, desk, cupboard, and sorted piles of clutter on the rug. Students direct each other to various spaces in the room to find specific items, using the prepositional language above and other phrases like ‘**turn left**’, ‘**half turn to the right**’, ‘**move forward 3 spaces**’, and so on.

Number: Money Savers

Number: [AC9MFN05](#) [AC9MFN06](#) [AC9M1N03](#) [AC9M1N04](#)
[AC9M1N05](#) [AC9M1N06](#) [AC9M2N04](#) [AC9M2N05](#)
[AC9M2N06](#)

Using pictures and/or concrete objects, students can look through toy, clothing, food catalogues and make a list or table of their ‘wants’ and ‘needs’, plus the cost of each item. Create buying scenarios with number equations. Add different prices to the objects, or instruct that each object is worth \$x. For example, ‘How much is a packet of chocolate biscuits (\$3) plus a plushie toy (\$7) plus a box of apples (\$5)?’

$$3 + 7 + 5 = \$15.$$

Next, challenge students to work to a budget (eg. no more than \$20 for 5 items) and decide what is needed versus what is wanted.



SCIENCE / STEAM -

The Study of Bugs

Science links: Biological sciences - [AC9SFU01](#) [AC9S1U01](#)
[AC9SFH01](#) [AC9S1H01](#) [AC9S2H01](#) [AC9SFI01](#) [AC9S1I01](#)
[AC9S2I01](#) [AC9SFI02](#) [AC9S1I02](#) [AC9SFI03](#) [AC9S1I04](#)
[AC9S2I04](#) [AC9SFI04](#) [AC9S1I05](#) [AC9S2I05](#) [AC9SFI05](#)
[AC9S1I06](#) [AC9S2I06](#)

Although the clutterbugs are fictional characters, students might like to research and write / draw about a bug or insect of their choice. Students could combine fact and fiction to create their own ‘clutterbug’ species. Students can:

- Watch videos or research books about a chosen bug or beetle species.
- Learn about the meanings of each stage of the bug’s life cycle, and complete a diagram with their findings.
- Write simple sentences about what bugs eat, their habitat, and their individual traits (this is where they could include the ‘clutterbug’s’ interest in mess).
- Explore the local area or garden for different kinds of bugs. Sketch pictures or take photos, observing its appearance and movements.
- Set up an enclosure to take care of their bug (for up to one week). More information about caring for a ladybug can be found at: **How to Take Care of a Ladybug Indoors: Feeding & Habitat.**
- Students could research and write a procedural text on how to care for their chosen bug.

Design and Build Your Own Sustainable Toys: STEAM Challenge

Science - Physical sciences: [AC9SFU02](#) [AC9S1U03](#)
Design and Technologies: [AC9TDEFP01](#) [AC9TDE2K01](#)
[AC9TDE2K02](#) [AC9TDE2K03](#) [AC9TDE2P01](#) [AC9TDE2P02](#)
[AC9TDE2P03](#) [AC9TDE2P04](#)
Visual Arts: [AC9AVA2E01](#) [AC9AVAFD01](#) [AC9AVA2D01](#)
[AC9AVAF01](#) [AC9AVA2C01](#) [AC9AVAFP01](#) [AC9AVA2P01](#)

Students can design, create and evaluate their own handmade toys from re-useable or recyclable materials.

- **Rocket or Clutterbug Climber:**

Using a rocket or clutterbug template, coloured pencils / markers, a straw and string, students can climb their toy up a 'mountainous heap' by pulling on the strings.

Instructions can be found here:

<https://buggyandbuddy.com/robot-craft-for-kids-free-printable-gliding-robot>

Science and engineering involved – physics, mechanics and pulleys. Using a pulley, the toy is moved in a different direction (upwards) by force over a distance.

- **Kites:**

Create a kite shape of your choice, or like the kite in the story, using coloured cardstock and string. Kites can also be made from plastic bags and straws, paper plates, or fabric.

Science involved – forces and flight. Lift is the upward force that pushes the kite into the air. This is stronger than the pull of gravity and air resistance (or drag).

- **Paper Roll Toys:**

Paper / cardboard tubes can be repurposed to become any toy with coloured paper, craft items and creativity. Ideas include space rockets, clutterbugs, animals, puppets, musical shakers, binoculars, etc.

Engineering involved – understanding of simple mechanics by adding moveable parts such as hinges, elastic bands and split pins.

- **Balloon-powered Rocket:**

Design and build a balloon-powered cardboard rocket that is propelled by the balloon's air. Blow up the balloon and hold the end while you attach it to the rocket. Let go and see how far it goes! Measure and record multiple events.

Alternatively, make a balloon rocket by attaching a blown-up balloon to a long piece of string (through a straw), tied to two adjacent doorknobs over a distance, then release the balloon to propel it across the string.

Science and engineering involved – physics of force and motion. The external force of the air pushes the rocket forward.

HEALTH AND PHYSICAL EDUCATION -

Healthy Mind / Healthy Body Ideas:

[AC9HPFP01](#) [AC9HP2P01](#) [AC9HPFP02](#) [AC9HPFP03](#)

[AC9HPFP04](#) [AC9HP2P02](#) [AC9HP2P03](#) [AC9HP2P04](#)

[AC9HPFP05](#) [AC9HP2P05](#) [AC9HPFM01](#) [AC9HPFM02](#)

[AC9HP2M01](#) [AC9HP2M02](#) [AC9HPFM03](#) [AC9HP2M03](#)

[AC9HPFM04](#) [AC9HP2M04](#) [AC9HP2M05](#)

Mindfulness and physical activity are ideal for mental, emotional and physical health, as well as building safe and healthy relationships with family and friends.

- Play with and take care of your pet/s.
- Look after your belongings by storing them in organised and safe places.
- Create a 'Clutterbug Zone' to sort out your belongings – make piles or boxes for items to KEEP, TOSS, RECYCLE or REPURPOSE and DONATE.
- Take donations to your local op shop or charity centre.
- Sort recyclable items into the correct bins (paper, glass, metal, plastic).
- Make homemade gifts for friends and family using unwanted items or household materials like boxes, bottles, paper tubes.
- Keep a money jar or piggy bank (or take money to the bank) to save for items you need (not unnecessary wants).
- Draw a picture or make a card for a friend's birthday. Enjoy a party with friends!
- Make your own sustainable toys or a clutterbug toy.
- Fly a kite.
- Go skateboarding.
- Play tennis or other favourite sport.
- Take your floaty device to the pool.
- Plant a flower or seedling into a pot or even an old boot!
- Build a cubby house.
- Write a daily journal or diary about your feelings, actions you're proud of, and special events for each day of the week.
- Celebrate your efforts to care for the environment!

THE ARTS: VISUAL ARTS -

[AC9AVA2E01](#) [AC9AVAFD01](#) [AC9AVA2D01](#) [AC9AVAF01](#)
[AC9AVA2C01](#) [AC9AVAFP01](#) [AC9AVA2P01](#)

Sew / No-Sew Clutterbug Creatures

Create a soft clutterbug toy (or a dog like Pierre).

- *Stuffed toy:* A simple soft clutterbug toy can be made by gluing two pieces of felt circles together with stuffing placed in the centre. Alternatively, extend students' fine motor skills with easy sewing loops through two pieces of felt or other fabric. Add details such as eyes and other body parts with your choice of materials. Don't forget to leave a hole to push the stuffing into before closing it all up!
- *Woollen toy:* Students could use wool to make their own pom poms. Use fabric glue to stick on eyes. Arms, legs, antennae and wings could be tied on with string or pipe cleaners.

An easy instructional video can be found at:
[DIY Pom Poms - Super FAST Pom Poms with Your Hand](#)

Recycled Paper Collage Art

Use a range of recycled paper and materials to create a 'mountainous heap' collage, including magazine or catalogue clippings, newspaper, coloured and patterned paper, cardboard, and so on. Students could add further details with paint or black markers. They might like to recreate a page from the book, or design their own scene of a 'messy' or 'tidy' room.

Clutterbugs Paper Chain

Fold a piece of paper multiple times, then cut out your clutterbug shape, making sure to leave a section on the fold. Open to find a chain of clutterbugs!





Clutter Sort

Find 20 items to sort into the following categories.

KEEP

TOSS

RECYCLE

Large empty rounded rectangular box for sorting items into the 'KEEP' category.

Large empty rounded rectangular box for sorting items into the 'TOSS' category.

Large empty rounded rectangular box for sorting items into the 'RECYCLE' category.



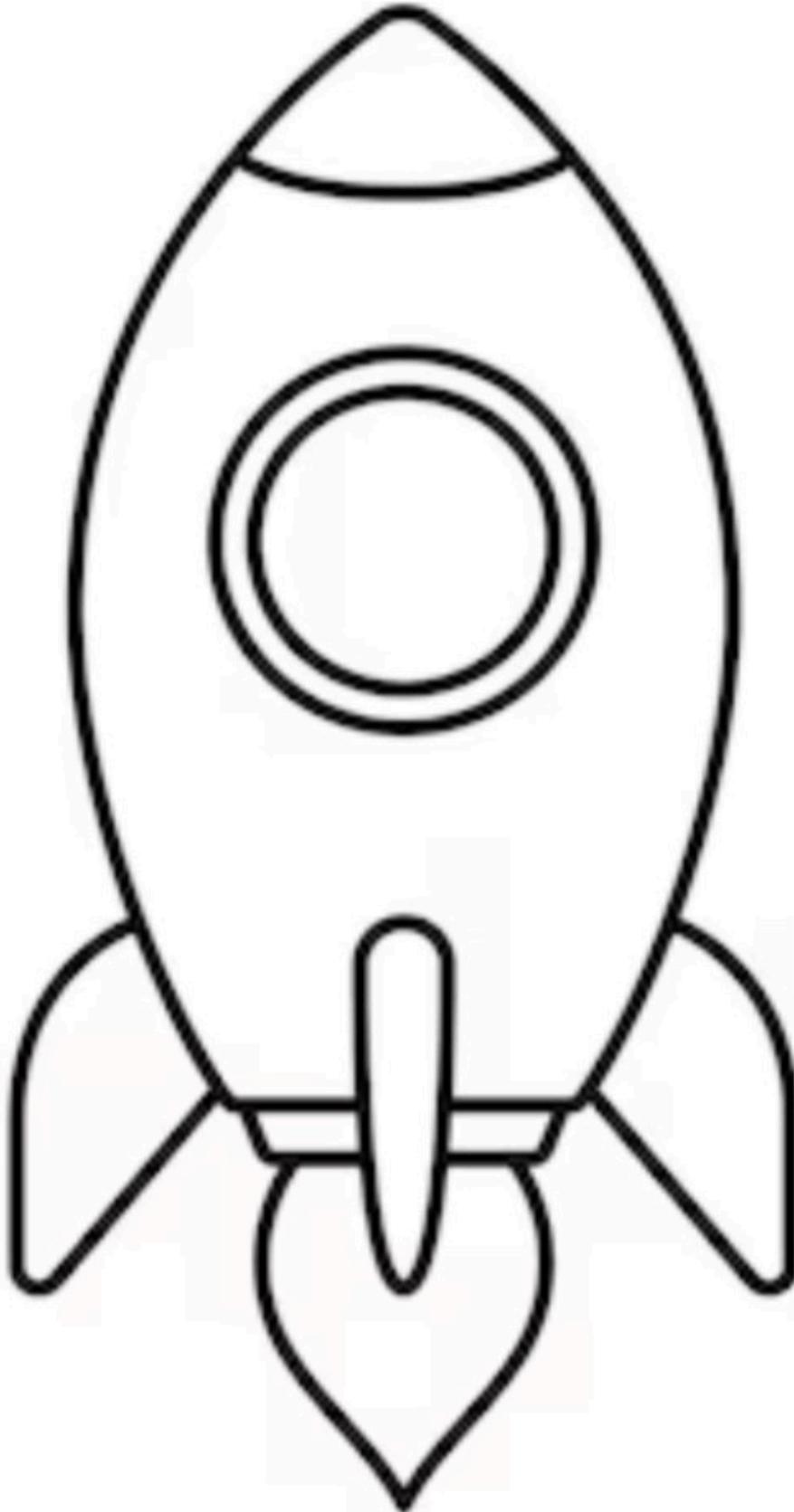
Which pile is the biggest? _____

Which items can be donated? _____

How did this activity make you feel? _____

Rocket

Use this rocket for word or art activities.



Clutterbug

Use this clutterbug for word or art activities.



Clutterbugs Word Search

Find the hidden words in the mess!

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

clutterbug

rocket

mess

repurpose

Pierre

Steff

recycle

waste

toss

keep

gift



