



going to ANTARCTICA!



NAME: _____



Thank you to Alta Planning + Design and the East Central Wisconsin Safe Routes to School program with funding provided by East Central Wisconsin Regional Planning Commission and the Wisconsin Department of Transportation.





SOMETHING EXCITING

It was Wednesday afternoon and Jordan was walking back home after school. It had snowed the night before. The trees and houses on her street were still white and sparkling. Kids in the neighborhood had made snowmen of all shapes and sizes and even some snow shelters. Jordan was having fun looking at all these sculptures on her way back home.

After a snack, she started her homework. She was done with it early that day. She went into the living room to see if her dog wanted to play tug of war. He raised his head, but wouldn't budge. Grandpa suggested helping to make his famous prune cookies. "Bleh!" said Jordan and shook her head. Instead, she decided to



play video games with her brother. They played together for a while. Quickly Jordan became bored of their game. They always stayed inside doing the same things. She felt that she was missing something by always staying inside.



She liked snowball battles or making snow angels. Jordan also had friends who really enjoyed playing outside and practicing winter sports like snowshoeing and ice skating. But she rarely joined them, even though she had received new snowshoes for Christmas from her grandparents.

While she was lost in her thoughts, feeling a bit blue, she remembered what her PE teacher explained in the morning. Teacher Manuel talked about the benefits of exercise and being active, even in winter. That's what she needed! Some fresh air... and maybe something exciting would happen! She was curious to explore her neighborhood with fresh eyes. Everything looks different when covered with snow!





2



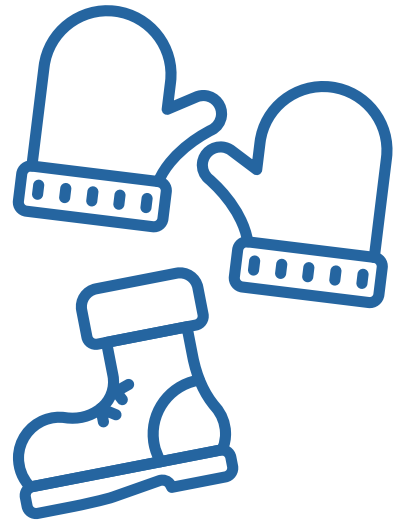
READY TO GO

Jordan was now determined to go outside and enjoy winter. But where and how? Her enthusiasm was soon replaced by worries. She decided to call her friend Kai, who loved winter activities. Her friend's dream was to go to Antarctica. Kai wanted to become a polar bear researcher and spent lots of time reading about that animal and its environment. He would surely have good ideas and suggestions. Kai was thrilled to help his friend appreciate winter as much as him.

The two friends were neighbors and agreed to meet up in between their houses to play and go for a walk. First, Jordan went to ask for her grandparents' permission to go out for a walk. She explained that she wanted to go outside with her friend Kai and told them where she would be and for how long. Kai did the same with his parents, telling them about their plan to go to the park down the street.



Kai started to get ready to go out. He carefully chose all his clothes to make sure he would stay warm and dry. First, his favorite base layer, made of warm wool. Then, his insulated jacket and finally his winter waterproof jacket. He added a hat, a scarf, a pair of gloves, and put them in a bag.



On the other hand, Jordan put on her winter jacket over a thick cotton long-sleeve shirt. Just before leaving, her grandparents stopped her. “Don’t forget to bring a flashlight!”. With daylight saving time, it was getting dark earlier in the evening. She went outside. When she met with Kai, he realized that Jordan was wearing sneakers. He told her he was worried she would get cold. He also took the extra pair of mittens he was carrying out of his bag. Jordan thanked him. Her hands were already getting a little chilly and wet without mittens.

The two friends walked happily toward the park. “Let’s pretend we are going to Antarctica!” said Jordan. It was snowing again and the wind was stronger, making it feel almost real.





TALLER THAN A SNOW FORT

The wind and snowflakes swirled around them. The two imagined they were scientists in Antarctica. They both leaned into the wind and kept walking. Suddenly, they heard loud sounds. Grunts, hisses, and a low rumble! But where were they coming from?

“A polar bear!” shouted Kai. Never would he expect one in Wisconsin! Jordan thought she could see it too, barely visible at the edge of the trees. “It must have been talking to other polar bears” said Kai. The great bear waved at them with her paw and said, “Hellooooo there! I am Bear. Follow me, if you dare.”

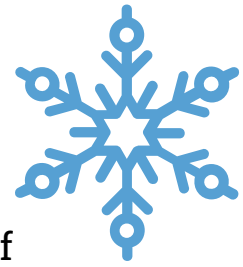
“How strange!” said Kai. “Very strange!” said Jordan.

The bear turned and ran. Kai and Jordan ran after it. They knew better than to approach wildlife, but this one talked to them!



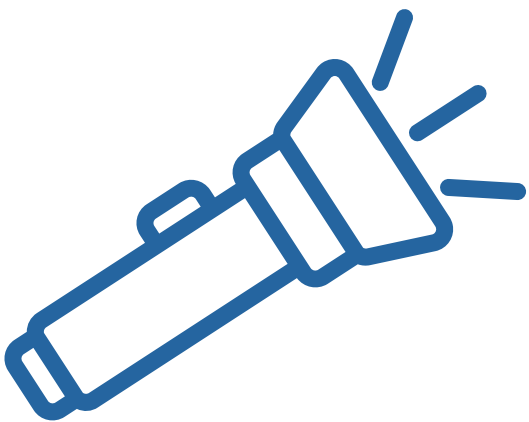


The two kids chased the bear across a snow-covered field, down a sidewalk toward the park. All of a sudden, Bear sped up and vanished through the opening of a very tall maze made of snow. Jordan reached the entrance first. "She's gone!" she yelled back to Kai. Soon, Kai was at her side and said, "I guess we should try to find her in the maze. Let's stick together". Jordan kicked some cold snow out of her sneakers.

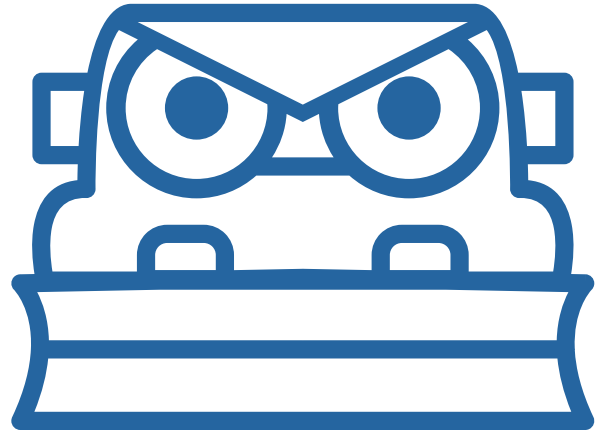


The two walked through the tall entrance, wondering who made the maze. It was even taller than the snow forts that they had seen middle school students make in their neighborhood. Kai turned on his flashlight. The two remembered what they had learned about making sure to see and hear what is happening around you. No sign of the bear. They turned a corner and could see something strange up ahead. They listened.

There was another low rumble in the distance, but this one didn't sound like an animal. They walked up to what looked almost like a driveway crossing their path.



“Grandma always tells me to look both ways at intersections, driveways too,” said Jordan. She looked to her left and then lept back! A snowplow with an angry face was headed right for them! The low rumble became a “whoosh” of snow as it sped down the maze. The plow was a mouth and the headlights were two angry eyes! Jordan and Kai stayed back and the plow zipped across their path, pushing and eating snow as it went. Finally, it vanished with a loud blow of its horn. “How strange!” said Kai. “Stranger and stranger!” said Jordan. The pair looked to the left of the crossing, to the right, and to the left again. Seeing no more magical plows, they continued on their way.





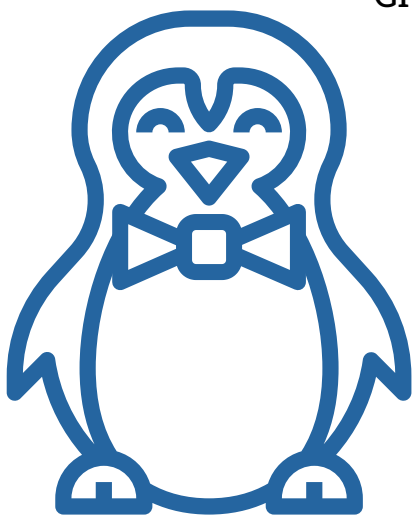
4



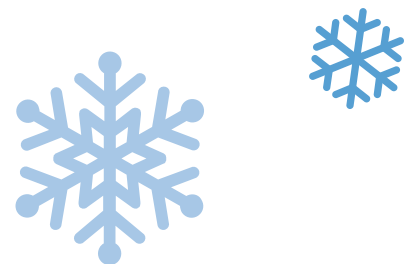
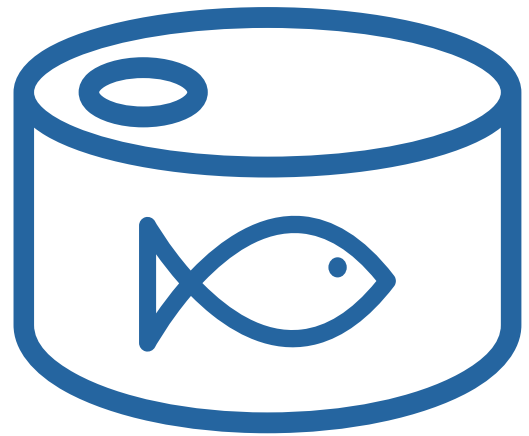
SHUFFLE THROUGH WONDERLAND

After a few more turns in the maze, they discovered a section that looked like a room made of ice. A friendly penguin slid on her belly towards them! Kai and Jordan were delighted. The penguin got up, bowed, and said, “My name is Janelle.” She straightened her bowtie and sang, “Do you know the penguin shuffle? Can you do it well?” Jordan and Kai looked at each other. “No, will you teach us?” they said excitedly. “Certainly!” said Janelle. “It’s all the rage here in wintery Wisconsin Wonderland”. More penguins slid into the icy room as Janelle lined up with Jordan and Kai. “Keep your flippers—err, I mean arms—out and to the side”, she instructed and the pair put out their arms.

“Great! Now, lean slightly forward. Take small steps and think of shuffling side to side as you walk.” She showed them. Kai and Jordan tried it and all the penguins clapped for them. “Remember not to take big steps. Don’t walk with one foot in front of the other, like you might do in summer time or inside.”



Jordan and Kai made it about halfway through the room. "My boots have a lot of tread for snow, but this shuffle really works on ice!" said Kai. "It's fun!" said Jordan, "I can keep my balance!" Janelle and the penguins circled around them. "Ice work!" they sang. One penguin gave them some small fish in a tin. "A snack for your journey!" he said. Another brought things that looked like small spikes attached to rubber. "You can attach these to your shoes or boots. They are called 'micro-spikes' or 'traction devices' and will help you walk in winter. Now, use your new penguin shuffle to leave this room and continue through the maze". Jordan and Kai thanked them and put the gifts in their pockets. They excitedly shuffled out of the room and into another maze hallway.





THE RIDDLE

“Wow! That was great!” said Jordan. Her hands were starting to get cold, but she kept them out of her pockets for balance. She wriggled her fingers and Kai did the same. “Are we almost there?” As if in response, they turned a corner and the hallway grew lighter. Was that the exit? “Something is in front of the exit” said Kai. Sure enough, they could see the exit. But it was blocked with rocks. They could see the snow covered playground in the distance. “Hello? Janelle? Snow plow? Bear?” called Jordan. “Arf! Arf! Arf!” called a seal in response. “I’m Neal and my friend Bear tells me you have learned a lot in our maze” said the seal.

Now Kai and Jordan were at the base of the rocks and looked up at the seal. Neal asked if they liked riddles and they both answered, “Yes!” They often solved crossword puzzles together. The seal jumped down to another rock so he was closer to Jordan and Kai. “Get this right and you’ll be on your way. You still have lots of time to play. But get it wrong, and you’ll stay here for another day.” Jordan and Kai gasped and looked at each other.

They had told their grandparents and parents that they would be back that evening! "I'm just kidding" said Neal, "It's not a whole day...but you do need to get it right to leave. You can do it!" This made them feel only a little better.

"Arf, arf!" said Neal "These are fun in winter and you'll look like a hare. Stand on top of snowdrifts and others will stare. Not magic but science will distribute your weight, in backcountry travel be sure to bring a matching mate. What am I?"

Jordan and Kai thought about it. They sat down in the snow. Then they thought some more. "Hmmm. What could we do in the backcountry in winter?" Jordan added, "Stand on a snowdrift? Look like a hare?" The two were quiet. The sun was moving in the sky and they were supposed to be home before dark.

"My grandparents will be worried if I'm not home," said Jordan. Thinking of Jordan's grandparents got her thinking... "That's it!" she exclaimed. They talked together and then announced, "Snowshoes!"





TEMPERATURE CHANGES

“Well done!” said Neal. “You may leave the maze!” He moved to the side to let them pass. They started climbing the big rocks. They were almost there! Jordan was getting hot from moving so she stopped to take off her coat and tied it around her waist. She kept climbing. Kai was also getting hot so he took off his outer waterproof layer and scarf.

They made it out! “Hooray!” they shouted. They were at the park by the playground. They turned around but the maze had vanished! “Look! A print!” said Kai. “I’ve read all about these and it had to have been Bear. But they lead back into the forest!” The two were amazed. They started for home. “Uh oh, you don’t look so good, Jordan” said Kai. Jordan was shivering in just her thick long-sleeve shirt. “I think you need to go inside and warm up” Kai said. Luckily, they were almost to her house. They leaned forward slightly and took short steps. They looked both ways and listened before crossing the last intersection.



Once at Jordan's house, she warmed up with dry, warm clothes. Grandpa made them each a warm mug of hot cocoa. Kai called his parents and told them where he was. Then, they told grandma and grandpa all about their trip. "Next time, I'm going to wear more layers and snow boots. I'll bring a hat, scarf, and gloves, too!" said Jordan. "I'm really glad you called me!" said Kai. "Next time maybe we can stay out longer and see even more animals! I'll wear my new micro-spikes!"



He looked in his pocket for the tin of fish. But where did it go? He checked all his pockets. Jordan checked hers. It was nowhere to be found. They sipped their cocoa and thought. Kai checked one last pocket. "How strange", said Kai. "Stranger and stranger," said Jordan. "Was this all a dream?"

Far away, they thought they heard many animals. Could it be Bear, Janelle the penguin, and Neal the seal?

THE END

