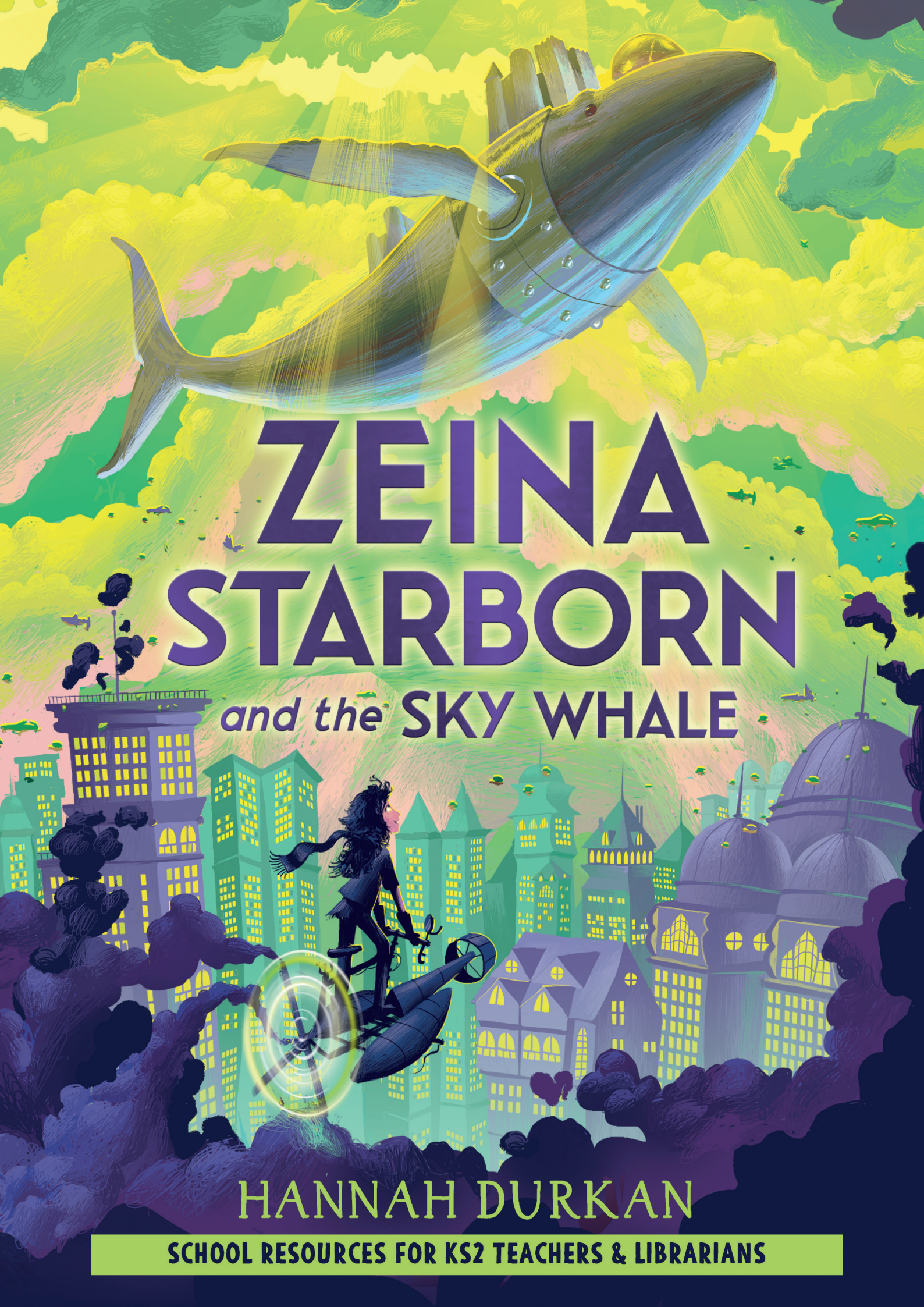

ZEINA
STARBORN
and the SKY WHALE
HANNAH DURKAN
SCHOOL RESOURCES FOR KS2 TEACHERS & LIBRARIANS

ZEINA STARBORN and the SKY WHALE

SCHOOL RESOURCES FOR KS2 TEACHERS & LIBRARIANS

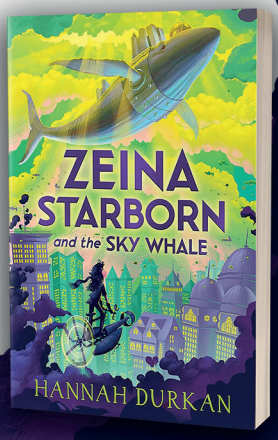
Suitable for: Ages 9+
Explore themes of: World-building, Creating characters, Descriptive writing, Explorers and Inventors!
Subject Checklist: Literacy, Art, Design & Technology, PSHE

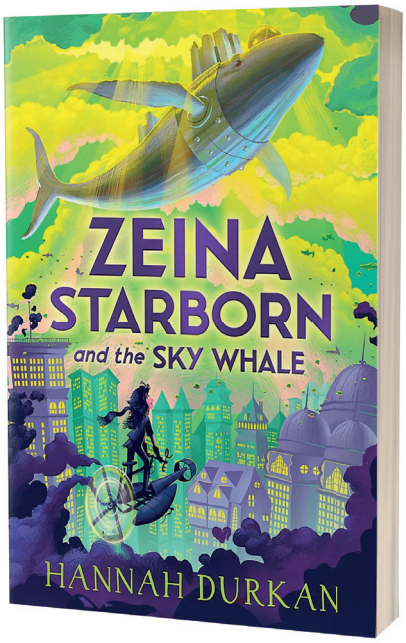
CONTENTS

EXTRACT 1: The City of Ravenport (taken from Chapter 1)
Objectives: Use details in an extract to draw a scene or setting; retrieve information from the book to understand the rules of the world created by the author and develop empathy

EXTRACT 2: Zeina the Inventor! (taken from Chapter 3)
Objectives: Draw Zeina's aerocycle; reflect on the inventions in the book; design your own invention from recyclable materials

EXTRACT 3: Introducing the Sky Whales! (taken from Chapter 8)
Objectives: Reflect on descriptive text in a passage from the book, use details to draw a sky whale, create your own sky whale using recyclable materials



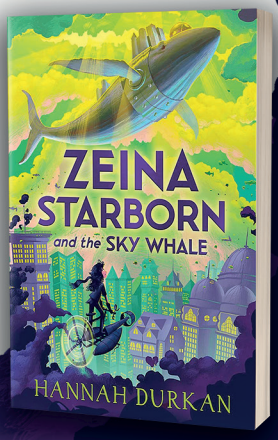


ABOUT THE BOOK

Meet explorers, inventors, and mighty sky whales in this richly inventive fantasy, perfect for 9+ fans of *BRIGHTSTORM* and *ORPHANS OF THE TIDE*.

Zeina Starborn spends her days dreaming of adventure in the sky and escaping the smog-filled city of Ravenport. So, when she wins the chance to visit the famous Willoughby Whale Hotel – a ginormous structure built on the back of a flying whale – Zeina grabs it. Even clashing with Jackson, spoiled heir to the Willoughby fortune, can't dampen her excitement.

But a series of clues makes her question what she's been told about this dazzling world of inventors, explorers and mighty sky whales. Zeina and Jackson must put aside their differences to uncover the secret plot around them as they embark on the journey of a lifetime.



EXTRACT ONE: THE CITY OF RAVENPORT

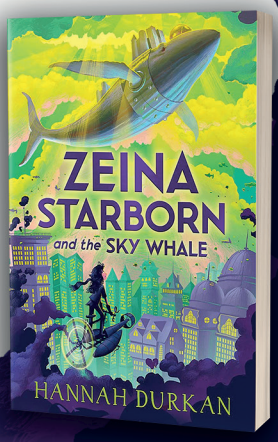
Every building in Ravenport had fans which worked day and night in an attempt to clear the streets of the thick pollution that covered the city. Despite this, it had been many years since anyone had been able to step outside without their respiratory mask.

Willoughby Towers was certainly the grandest building in all of Ravenport. Zeina had seen drawings of when it was first built – fifty floors of gleaming golden stone, with high, arched windows separated by ornately carved columns and surrounded on all sides by immaculate gardens. Even now, with its towering exterior blackened from ore fumes, cracked stone cherubs leering down through crack-toothed smiles, and lobby windows boarded shut against the noxious fumes, Zeina had to agree it was still pretty impressive. You couldn't see all the way to the top any more, of course; looking up from the street outside, most of the building was completely obscured by thick, grey clouds.

For the people living inside Willoughby Towers, and the hundreds of tower blocks just like it across the Easter Continent, life was a tale of two halves. Belows lived in the cramped, gloomy apartments below the city smog-line. Belows couldn't afford fine clothes or food or airship travel. Belows worked hard to survive. But for the other half, life was full of perks. Perks like the uniformed doorman who was now rushing to open the door for Mrs Hogwood. Unlike Zeina, Aboves were permitted to use the grand entrance lobby and its golden electric lift. Aboves could afford the luxurious apartments, safely above the smog, on floors thirty and above. Aboves even had windows – ones they could actually open to breathe in the bright, clear air above the smog-line. Zeina imagined Mrs Hogwood gazing out appreciatively from her window on floor forty-five, waving at the fine ladies and gentlemen of Ravenport travelling block to block in their airships. She also imagined how much Mrs Hogwood would enjoy thinking about all the Belows stuck in that eternal murky twilight beneath her.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

- How can you tell that Ravenport is heavily polluted? Pick out key words and phrases in the extract.
- Look up and define the following words or phrases: 'respiratory mask'; 'ornately'; 'immaculate'; 'noxious fumes'; 'obscured'; and 'smog-line'.
- Which building in Ravenport is described as 'pretty impressive' despite its 'towering exterior blackened from ore fumes'?
- Why is life 'a tale of two halves' in Ravenport?
- What do you learn about Zeina in the extract?



ACTIVITY ONE: WIILLOUGHBY TOWERS

Draw an image of Willoughby Towers when it was first built. Then, draw an image of Willoughby Towers according to the description of how it looks now. What has changed about the building? Why?

ACTIVITY TWO: ABOVES AND BELOWS

- What are 'Aboves' and 'Belows' in *Zeina Starborn and the Sky Whale*? Discuss this in pairs or with your class
- In the below columns, write down the different perks or limitations for each group. To get you started, use the list provided at the bottom of the page
- Next, write down how you feel these perks or limitations impact the people living in Ravenport. For example, what impact would living in an apartment below the city smog-line have on the characters? How might this make them feel?

ABOVES	BELOWS

Live in apartments below the city smog-line.

Work hard to survive.

Have a uniformed doorman to open the door.

Use the entrance lobby and its golden electric lift.

Afford luxurious apartments above the smog.

Live on floors twenty-nine and below.

Have windows to breathe in the air above the smog-line.

Can't afford fine clothes, food or airship travel.

EXTRACT TWO: ZEINA THE INVENTOR!

In a box beneath her bed, covered in a sheet, lay her masterpiece. She ran her fingers over it lovingly, feeling the cool, hard metal. She unfolded the golden tube, hinged in the middle. At one end were two wooden airship propellers and the fears and pedals from a velocycle. It was to these she secured the golden cog and began to turn. The pedals now glided smoothly, just as she had anticipated. Finally she pulled and folded the last of the parts and as everything clicked into place, she beamed. It was definitely going to work!

If she didn't feel guilty for the stolen cog, she certainly did for the very last part she attached. It was one she had found hidden right at the back of her dad's desk drawer. Her dad had been working harder and later than ever recently. She'd guessed the Willoughbys had him working on a new airship model – something that they didn't want the other Above families to know about. And when she found the plans and this part, she knew she was right.

It looked a little bit like a gas-lamp canister with a propeller attached to one side. She bolted it under the saddle and hopped on. Holding the handles and turning one of the gears, she started to pedal. To her immense joy, it jumped a little into the air, hovering a few centimetres off the ground. After a silent screech of victory, she tentatively angled the handlebars upwards and pedalled steadily. WHOOSH! Up it lurched, with such speed that she walloped her head on the ceiling and fell to the floor with an almighty clatter.

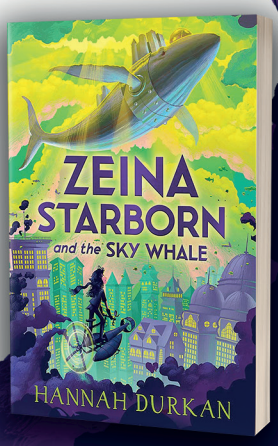
'Zeina? What was that? Are you OK?' Her father's voice drifted in through her window.

'Yes, I'm fine, Dad. Don't come in! I just . . . fell over. I'm getting changed. I'll be out in a minute!'

Despite the large, egg-shaped bump developing on her forehead, Zeina grinned – her 'aerocycle' worked!

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

- What does Zeina consider to be 'her masterpiece'?
- What <u>materials</u> has Zeina used to make her aerocycle?
- What is the <u>function</u> of Zeina's aerocycle? What does she want it to do?
- What does Zeina guess about her dad's work? Why?
- Why do you think Zeina doesn't want her dad to come into the room?
- Look up and define the following words or phrases: 'canister'; 'propeller'; 'bolted'; 'immense'; 'clatter'; and 'tentatively'.



ACTIVITY ONE: ZEINA'S AEROCYLE INVENTION!

Draw Zeina's aerocycle on the page below. You can use the aerocyle on the book's front cover as inspiration, or draw your own interpretation. Label the aerocycle with the materials that have been used to create it

As you read the book, make a list of Zeina' inventions, or any interesting machines or contraptions that appear in the story. Which is your favourite? Why?

ACTIVITY TWO: RECYLABLE MATERIALS

- What items do you throw away at school or at home? For example, an empty toilet roll, an egg carton, a plastic bottle. Write a list of the most common items that you throw away.
- Time to put your Zeina Starborn hat on! Could these materials be used to create something new? Write a list of new ways that you could use this item. For example, could you use an empty toilet roll as a pencil pot? Draw your ideas if you would like to.

Item:
New use:

Item:
New use:

Item:
New use:

Item:
New use:

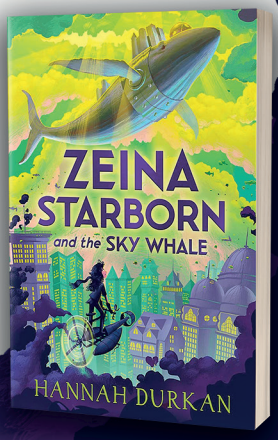
EXTRACT THREE: INTRODUCING THE SKY WHALES

Through the lenses, the rough texture of the great whale's hide leapt into view, scrapes and grooves magnified like deep scratches on the hull of an airship. He zoomed out a little. The whale was blueish-grey in colour with a mottled underbelly the colour of newly forged steel. White teeth protruded from an upturned mouth and its huge eye was dark and unblinking, a bottomless pool of inky water.

Jackson knew that the Willoughby Whale was the largest sky whale hotel in existence. Since his grandfather first captured it from the wild almost fifty years ago, it had quadrupled in size. Each great flipper was now the size of at least ten airship platforms and the whale itself easily the length of two Willoughby Towers stood one on top of the other. The body stretched out and tapered into a sweeping tail, curved flukes rising and sinking in a slow, graceful dance. Bolted around the great beast's middle were sheets of metal that had been hammered and welded into a harness. This was the base of the hotel – the first structure laid down after the STAN system was fitted – and it was on to this harness thatall the other parts of the hotel had been built. Starting with the glass-domed observation deck near its head, towers, turrets and archways had been built, one on top of another, to form what looked like a magnificent city riding upon the beast's back. As the whale grew, the harness was adjusted and extended, making more and more room for extra buildings and attractions. Jackson spotted the parapet of the Grand Casino near the tail, the last addition to be erected before the whale had stopped growing. The harness appeared tight in places, the metal shell cutting deep grooves into the thick grey hide, and Jackson couldn't help but wonder if it was uncomfortable for the creature and why no one had bothered to adjust it.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

- The author uses descriptive language to describe the Sky Whale Hotel. What key words/phrases jump out to you?
- What is your first impression of the Sky Whale Hotel?



ACTIVITY ONE: WHALES IN THE WILD

In real life, where do whales live? Individually or in pairs, research whales and their environment. Write down what you find below.

How do whales in real life differ from the sky whales in the book?
Why might the sky whales be being treated unfairly?

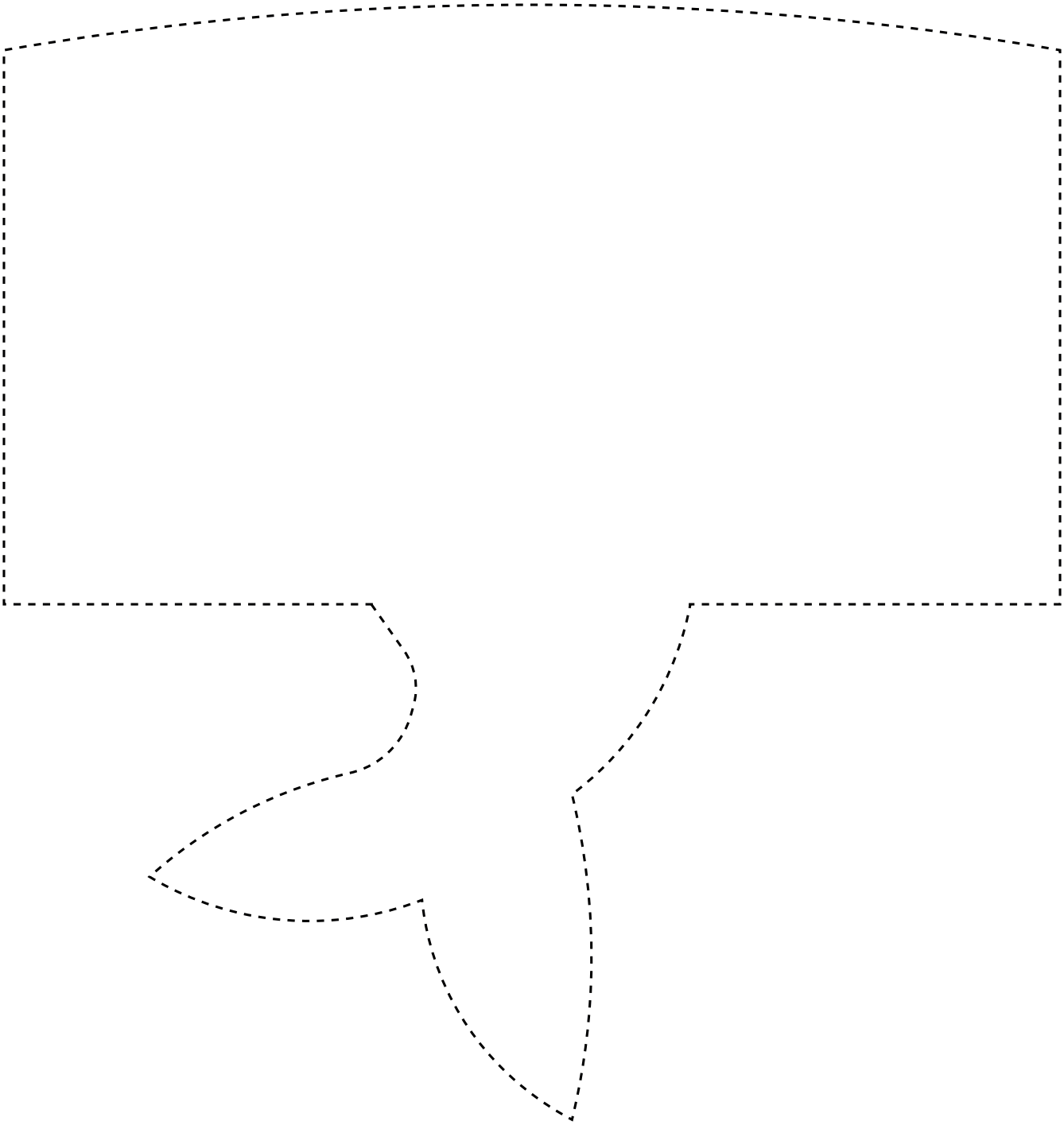
ACTIVITY TWO: CREATE YOUR OWN SKY WHALE!

You will need:

- An empty toilet roll holder
- Blue and/or grey coloured paper
- Glue or tape
- Scissors
- Googly eyes (optional)

Instructions:

- Cut-out the below template
- Glue the googly eyes (if using) in the top centre of the page. Alternatively, cut out 2 x small white circles from a piece of plain paper and stick these on as eyes
- Draw a mouth underneath the eyes
- Use Sellotape or glue to wrap your card around your toilet roll and secure it in place
- Cut out 2 x triangles and glue these to either side of your toilet roll, to serve as fins



Please make sure an adult is present when you are using scissors.