

Newsletter

Junior Angler of the Month—Meet Ava Ellison

"It doesn't matter if you catch fish or not, it's still going to be a fun time!"

This is the message that seven-year-old Ava Ellison would like to pass along to other young anglers. She started fishing in the summer of 2019 and her time on the water really took off in 2020 when her family bought a 9' inflatable dingy, providing many more fishing opportunities. "We've made it no secret that we're all in when it comes to fishing," says Rocky, Ava's father and favourite fishing buddy. "She helps with all the preparations when we're getting ready for a trip". Originally from Alberta, the Ellison family moved to Cambridge six years ago and spends as much time on the water as possible.

So far, Ava's biggest catch is a smallmouth bass that she caught while visiting the Sudbury area this past Thanksgiving. She has also caught largemouth bass, catfish, crappie, perch, bluegill and pumpkinseed during her trips to local fishing spots: Little Lake, the Grand, Speed, and Nith Rivers and her favourite, Shade's Mills Conservation Area where she catches 20 – 40 fish every time she goes out. Ava's quite comfortable

holding fish, removing the hook and handling live bait like worms and minnows. Her favourite lure is a blue and silver Rapala Rattlin' Rap.

One of Ava's fishing tips for new anglers is to get a good grip on the fish before remov-



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ing the hook by sliding your hand down and around the length of it – and remember – look out for those dorsal spines!

Although she's not aware if any of her school friends are involved in fishing, there's plenty of interest in her neighbourhood. A number of the kids on her street already have their own fishing gear and will often hang around their boat when they see it in the driveway. One of her neighbourhood friends, Qasim, occasionally joins Ava and Rocky on their fishing adventures.

With winter around the corner, Ava is looking forward to trying ice fishing for the first time and her dad has already started gathering the equipment they'll need. They may try for perch on Lake Simcoe or perhaps target Ava's bucket list fish – walleye! She and her dad practice "catch and release" understanding the importance of conservation and keeping healthy populations of fish for future generations.

Ava also enjoys watching fishing shows on TV and follows Brandon Cobb of North Carolina, Bassmaster Elite Series Champion. She dreams of one day fishing at Lake Fork in Texas and maybe even catching an 11 lb bass like Brandon did. When she's older, Ava would like to some sort of job that involves fishing and the outdoors. In the meantime, her dad is exploring the idea of joining a BASS club here in Ontario to add to his fishing knowledge and then passing it along to Ava. There may even be an opportunity for her to join a Jr BASS club in the future.

Ava's final piece of advice to those that are interested in fishing is, "You have to go to bed early because you have to get up early", and she doesn't have a problem with that especially when it's waking up for fishing.

What's Ava's favourite thing about fishing? "Spending time with my dad," she says, to which he replies, "I couldn't ask for a better fishing buddy!"



Ice Fishing for Pan Fish

Pan fish are game fish that usually do not outgrow the size of a frying pan. Yellow perch, bluegill, black crappie and pumpkinseed are examples of pan fish and people love to eat them.

Ice Fishing Rod

The first thing to do is to make sure that you have the proper rod and line that is needed for ice fishing pan fish. Talk to someone at your local tackle store. I am sure they would love to help you.

A 24 – 26" light or ultra-light ice rod paired up with a 500 or 1000 series reel is the best set up for catching pan fish.



Lures and Baits

There are different baits that can be used and one of the most important things to think about is how big is the mouth of the fish that you are fishing for? Do not be afraid to cut worms, plastics and minnows into a smaller size as this makes it easier for the fish to get hooked.

There are many great methods to catch pan fish and the one that is the most effective is **Jigging**. This is where you let the line with bait fall to the bottom of the water you are fishing and you move it up and down to provide action for the bait. Check out the YouTube links below where you can see some of the different ways of jigging.

One thing to remember is to change the colours and sizes of what bait you are using. If you do not get a bite within 15 minutes, change it up! Have fun and remember to be safe on the ice!

For more information, check out:

How to Catch Bluegills and Perch Through the Winter Ice

<https://youtu.be/jB6WVUR0cuY>

3 Go-To Baits for Ice Fishing Panfish

<https://youtu.be/dDOIe2VxrqE>

Panfish Lures & Baits

- small jigging spoons
- small jigs
- minnows
- slim profile baits
- nymph-like plastics



Ice Fishing Safety

1. Before heading out onto the ice be sure to check the weather conditions for the day and the ice conditions. Your local ice hut operators and bait shops are a good source for current ice conditions. Continue to watch weather conditions throughout the day as they can change rapidly. (Generally, blue and black ice is the safest and grey and white is the weakest). **No ice is 100% safe.**

2. Avoid fishing near culverts, rivers, open water etc. as the ice is generally very weak in those areas.



<https://www.costadelmar.com/en-us/sunglasses/TAN-97963497756>

3. Wear the appropriate clothing for the temperatures and the conditions. Wool and fleece are generally the warmest. Dress in layers so you can remove layers if you start getting to warm.

4. Learn the signs of hypothermia. Hypothermia can set in without you realizing and is a very serious condition that requires immediate medical attention.

5. Be aware of your surroundings. There can be ice in different stages within the same area. Ice rarely freezes as the same thickness. Also watch for holes left from other fishermen.

6. Wear a personal flotation device or suit, just in case you go through the ice. This will prevent you from getting stuck under the ice or sinking.

7. Have a pair of ice safety picks in case you go through the ice. These are worn around your neck so you have quick access to them. These will allow you to hold on to the ice or pull yourself out of the hole.



<https://shop.clamoutdoors.com/floating-ice-picks.html>

8. Wear boots rated for the temperatures you are going to be in and attach a pair of ice cleats to keep your traction on the ice. These will save you from slipping and falling on the ice.

9. Wear sunscreen and sunglasses. You can still get a sunburn even in the winter and the glare from the ice can make it hard to see.

10. Bring food and water with you. Physical exertion and cold weather can rob you of energy very quickly. Also, if the weather changes and you get stuck out on the ice, you will have something to drink and eat until help arrives.

11. Make sure to check the fishing regulations for the body of water you are going to be on before you hit the ice. This will allow you to know about what fish are in season, how many lines you are allowed in the water, slot size, limits, etc. A printed copy can come in handy in case you do not get service on your phone.

<https://www.ontario.ca/page/fishing>



<https://www.amazon.com/OuterStar-Traction-10-Stud-Crampons-Footwear/dp/B071KNL2M2>

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12. Always take a cell phone or satellite phone so you can get help if needed. Tell someone where you are going and when you will be back. If you are not back in time, that person can call the police and guide them to where you should be.
13. Always take safety equipment with you. Examples: safety kit, rope, flashlight/headlamp, survival blanket and the items mentioned above. **Do not fish alone!** Make sure you are within eyesight of your family or friends just in case something happens.
14. Learn more about hypothermia at:

<https://buythermopro.com/knowledge/hypothermia-body-temperature/>

The infographic is titled "SPOT" in large red letters, flanked by blue snowflake icons. It is divided into two main sections: "FROSTBITE" on the left and "HYPOTHERMIA" on the right.

FROSTBITE

A victim is often unaware of frostbite because frozen tissue is numb.

Signs & Symptoms

- Redness or pain in any skin area may be the first sign of frostbite.

Other signs include:

- a white or grayish-yellow skin area
- skin that feels unusually firm or waxy
- numbness

HYPOTHERMIA

Hypothermia often occurs at very cold temperatures, but can occur at cool temperatures (above 40°F), if a person is wet (from rain, sweat or cold water) and becomes chilled.

Signs & Symptoms

Adults:

- shivering
- exhaustion
- confusion
- fumbling hands
- memory loss
- slurred speech
- drowsiness

Infants:

- bright red, cold skin
- very low energy

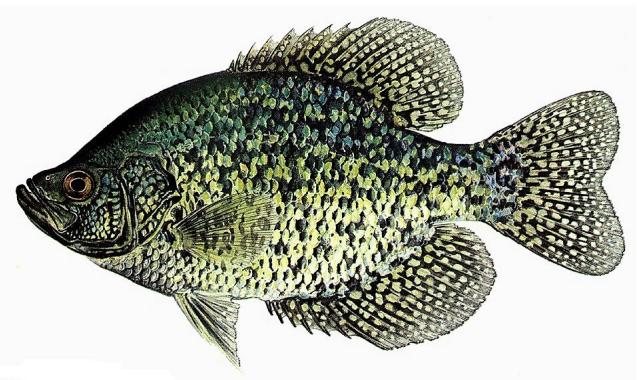
If a person's temperature is below **95°** get medical attention immediately.

Fish of the Month: Black Crappie

Crappie are one of the most popular panfish to catch since they can grow quite large and anglers say they are the best tasting fish.

What does a Black Crappie look like?

Crappie are small deep-bodied fish. They are silvery with blue green stripes or spots. The black crappie can be quite dark with black blotches. They have a large soft papery mouth that extends below their eye. They grow anywhere from 18 - 38 cm (7 - 15 in) in length (sometimes even bigger) and usually weigh 0.23 – 0.45 kg (0.5 – 1.0 lbs). The Ontario record Crappie was 1.7 kg (3.8 lbs). They are beautiful fish!



Where do they live?



You can find Crappie in most lakes in Southern to Northwestern Canada including the Great Lakes. They prefer warm, clear vegetated lakes, ponds and rivers with little current.

Crappie travel in schools both in the summer and winter. Early in the year, April and May the fish start moving inshore to warmer waters to feed and to spawn. Anglers are most successful during this time in canals and shallow bay areas with cover such as weeds, wood and docks. As the weather warms up the fish will move a little deeper but still hang out around weed lines or off rocky points. Traditionally, the best time to catch crappie are morning and evening but you can still find some in the middle of the day.

Crappie are also a great fish to catch through the ice in the winter. They like to move around in the winter so being able to be mobile and try different spots is a best. Fish can be in shallow water along weed lines but you can also find them in deeper basins. Having electronics is certainly an advantage while ice fishing.

How can I catch a Crappie?

Crappie feed on smaller fish, insects and zooplankton (small organisms floating in the water).

There are many plastic baits geared towards crappie fishing with lots of colours to choose from. A panfish jig with a plastic creature bait or tube or



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just a worm works well. You could also try small spinner baits or small crankbaits. Using a light bobber or strike indicator is useful because you will see your bobber dip under the water when the fish bites your lure and it also makes it very exciting!

It is best to use a light set up when fishing for crappie. Their bite can be difficult to feel so a light rod with a sensitive tip and 4 to 6 lb test line is best.

Be sure to check the fishing regulations for your zone and license type for daily crappie limits.



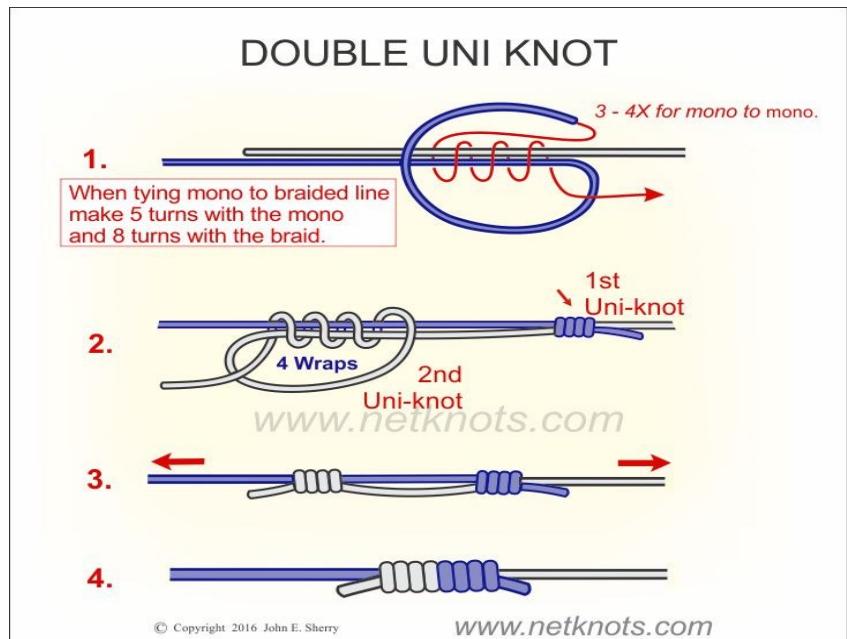
The Double Uni Knot (also known as the Uni to Uni Knot)

The Double Uni is a knot that is used to tie two lines together. It is good for joining lines of similar or different strengths or diameters, and is particularly useful for tying braid to mono or fluorocarbon line. The break strength of this knot is between 90 and 100%. It can also be used for tying on leaders or tippets and it's a relatively easy and quick knot to tie. This knot also passes easily through the guides on your fishing rod. It is basically tying the uni knot with the line doubled, twice at two ends. So if you can do a single uni knot, you'll certainly be able to do the Double Uni Knot.

For this knot, I find it helpful to first look at a diagram, watch an animated video, or have it demonstrated to get a visual of how to do the knot.

Here are the instructions for tying the line:

- Overlap the ends of the lines to be joined and leave enough room to be able to take the end of the line from the left and double back and make 3 or 4 (or up to 6) wraps around both lines and through the loop that was formed. Pull the tag end to tighten.
- Then repeat with the end of the line on the left making the same number of wraps unless tying with braided line, in which you should double the number of wraps.
- You now have two tied Uni Knots which will not slide past each other, creating a strong connection. Pull on the two lines in the opposite direction and this will bring the two knots together and tighten. (Another tip, moisten the area where you have created the wraps and knot, before pulling the tag ends and tightening it).



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- Clip the ends close to the knot.

This is one of the first knots that I learned and I use it a lot when I fish throughout the year. Again, I would also encourage you to watch others do it, or watch an animated video, and have printed off and keep a laminated copy from netknots.com. To help me as I learned, I had laminated copies of several common knot diagrams I used for easy reference in my tackle box.

There are a lot of resources on the internet and I would encourage you to explore them. Below is one website I have found helpful and easy to understand. Also explore online videos and animations that will help you understand how to do this knot.

Happy fishing! For more about the double uni knot see:

https://www.netknots.com/fishing_knots/double-uni-knot

Want even more great fishing content?

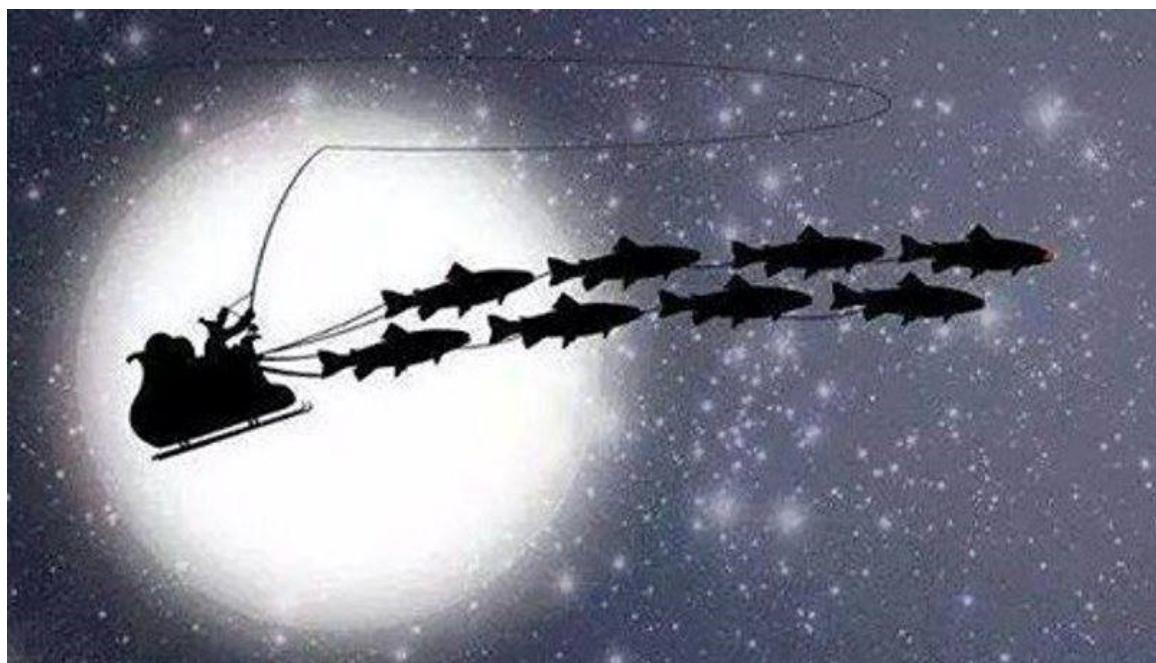
For more ice fishing safety tips , check out:

<https://www.takemefishing.org/ice-fishing/ice-fishing-basics/ice-fishing-with-kids/>

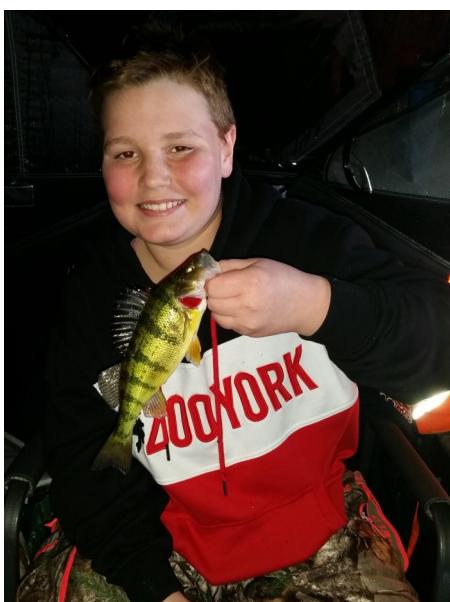


Can't get out on the ice yet? Try out this neat ice fishing science experiment:

<https://www.sciencefun.org/kidszone/experiments/ice-fishing/>

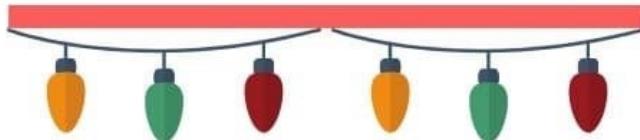


Junior Club Photos

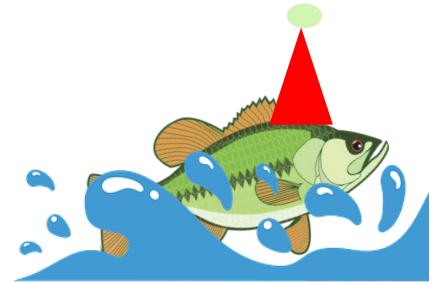




CHRISTMAS GAMES AND ACTIVITIES



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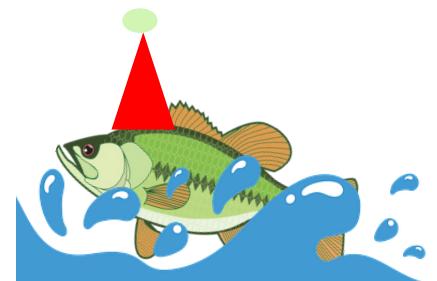
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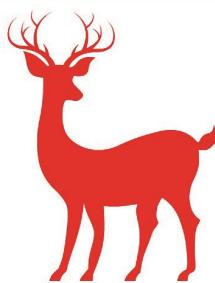


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Christmas Reindeer

Word Search



P	R	A	N	C	E	R	S	E	D	D
P	N	E	E	R	E	L	E	N	O	A
R	C	E	V	E	E	D	D	O	N	R
E	H	T	E	I	B	A	A	R	N	U
S	R	E	G	N	L	N	S	T	E	D
E	I	H	S	D	I	C	H	H	R	O
N	S	C	A	E	T	E	E	P	C	L
T	T	O	N	E	Z	R	R	O	U	P
S	M	M	T	R	E	E	E	L	P	H
E	A	E	A	E	N	H	A	E	I	A
E	S	T	V	I	X	E	N	A	D	A

Words to find:

BLITZEN
DASHER
REINDEER

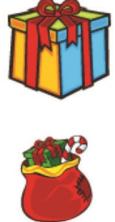
CHRISTMAS
DONNER
RUDOLPH

COMET
NORTHPOLE
SANTA

CUPID
PRANCER
SLEIGH

DANCER
PRESENTS
VIXEN

How many of each can you find in the box below?



Christmas Activities

Cut or choose Christmas tree

Have an ugly sweater competition

Make a holiday greeting video and send it to friends and family

Go on a Christmas themed scavenger hunt

Have a Christmas movie marathon

Make a Christmas song playlist and have a family dance party

Take family photos with Santa

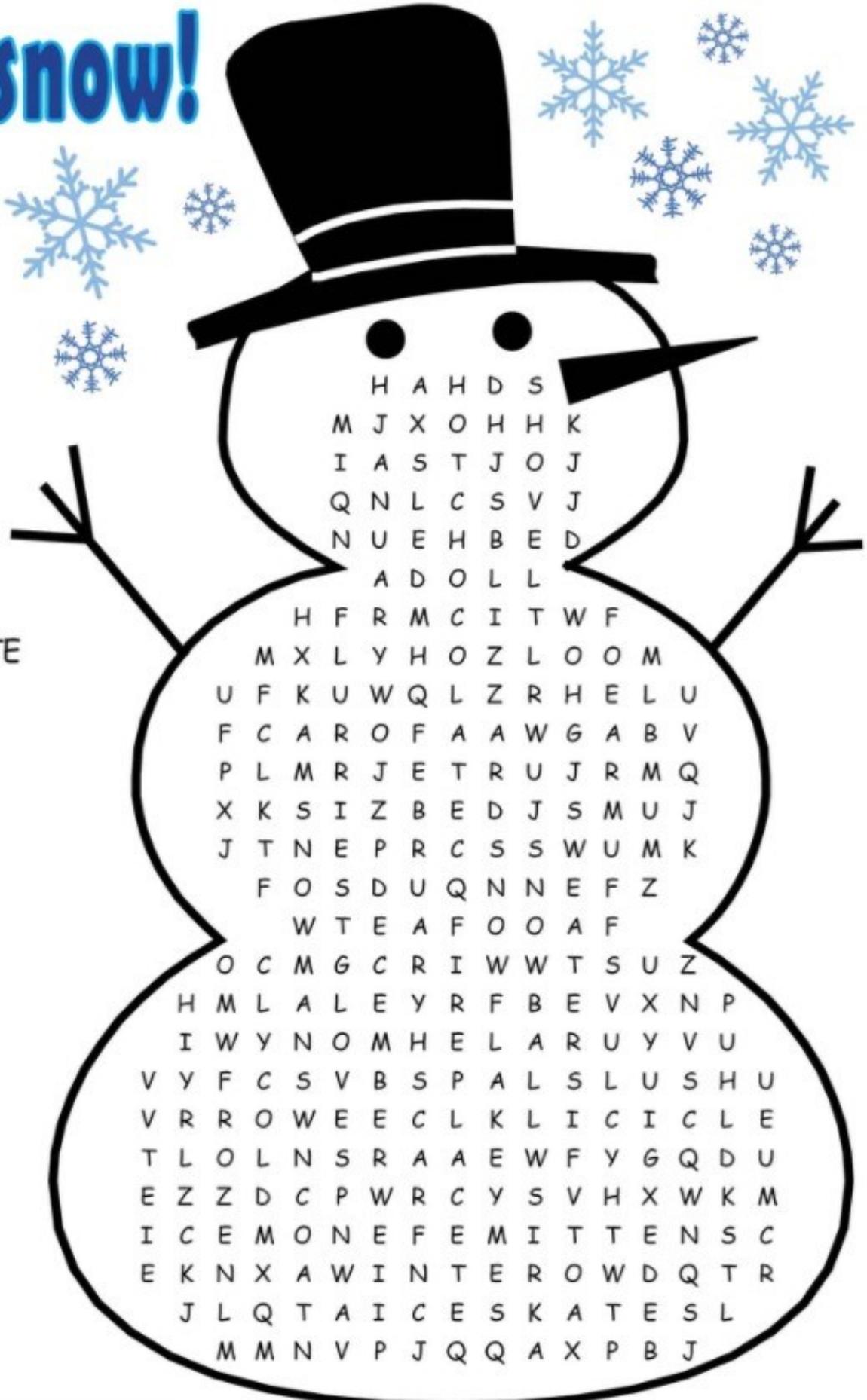
Have a silly, Christmas- themed family photo shoot

Take a ride to look at Christmas lights in the neighborhood

Attend your community's tree lighting event

Let it snow!

BLIZZARD
COAT
COLD
DECEMBER
EARMUFFS
FEBRUARY
FIREPLACE
FLURRIES
FROZEN
GLOVES
HOT CHOCOLATE
ICE
ICE SKATES
ICICLE
JANUARY
MITTENS
SCARF
SHOVEL
SLED
SLUSH
SNOWBALL
SNOWFLAKE
SNOWMAN
SWEATER
WINTER



Name: _____