Before you start

A few minutes of cutting is plenty. Follow your child's lead, and stop while it's still fun.

Print the pages

Every activity is on its own page. Print the pages you need, as many times as you like, and give your child one page at a time.

Hold the scissors

The thumb goes in the small hole and points up, like a thumbs-up. The fingers go in the big hole. The scissors point away from the body, and the elbow stays close to the side.

Use the helper hand

The other hand holds and turns the paper. On curves and corners, the paper turns while the scissors hand stays steady.

Read the page together

- Start cutting here.
- Stop snipping at the circle.
- Stop, turn the paper, then keep going.
- Stop. This line is done.

Grey roads show how close to the line is close enough. They get narrower as skills grow.

Left-handed?

Use left-handed scissors. If a line starts on the right, your child can turn the page and start from the other end. Up-and-down lines work for both hands.

Sit to cut

Sit at a table with feet flat on the floor or on a step stool.

Find your child's stage

The chart on the next page shows the 7 stages in order. Start at the stage that matches your child, even if it's an early one. Every page has an easier and a harder idea, and the last page of each stage says when your child is ready to move on. Color the star on each page when it's done.

Printing tips

Print on one side of the paper only. Choose "Actual size" or "**100%**" in the print settings so the lines print at the right size. Cardstock makes the pages sturdier and easier to hold.

How cutting skills grow

Children learn to cut in a set order. Each stage builds the skill the next one needs, so start at the stage that matches your child, even if it's an early one.

Stage	Often around age	What it looks like	Ready to move on when your child...
1 **Snip** pages 5 to 19	2 to 3	One snip at a time. The scissors don't move forward yet.	makes a clean snip on most lines
2 **Snip forward** pages 21 to 35	about 3	Opens and closes again and again to cut across a strip.	cuts all the way across a strip with snips in a row
3 **Straight lines** pages 37 to 53	3 to 4	Cuts along a line about 6 inches long while the helper hand holds the paper.	stays within ½ inch of the line, then ¼ inch
4 **Corners and zigzags** pages 55 to 69	after straight lines	Stops at a corner, turns the paper, and keeps cutting.	stops at the dot and turns the paper without help
5 **Curves** pages 71 to 85	about 4	Follows a wavy line, turning the paper with the helper hand.	stays within ¼ inch of a curved line
6 **Simple shapes** pages 87 to 105	4 to 5	Cuts out a circle, then a square and a triangle.	cuts out a shape within ¼ inch of the line
7 **Complex shapes** pages 107 to 123	5 to 6	Cuts out pictures with both curves and corners.	cuts out a picture with curves and corners on their own

Ages are averages. Every child moves at their own pace, so go by the last column, not the age.

Warm up before Stage 1
Snip a playdough snake into pieces. Snip a straw into "beads." Tear paper into strips with both hands.

Pick scissors that fit
Small loops, short blades and rounded tips. A left-handed child needs left-handed scissors.

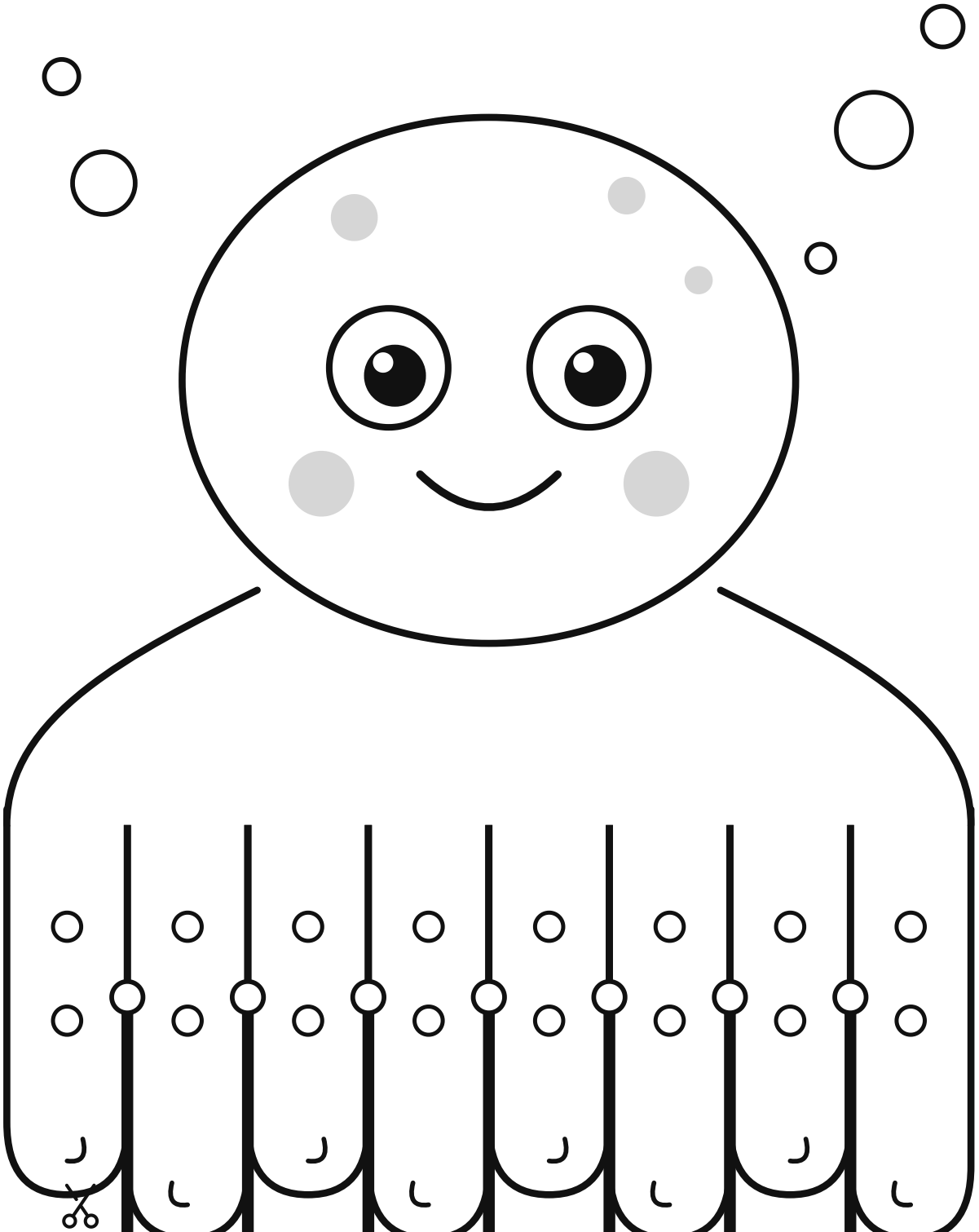
Floppy page?
Stiffer paper is easier to hold. Glue the page onto an empty cereal box before cutting.

Wiggly octopus legs

Start at the bottom edge ✂. Make one snip on each thick line. Stop at the circle ○.

Done!

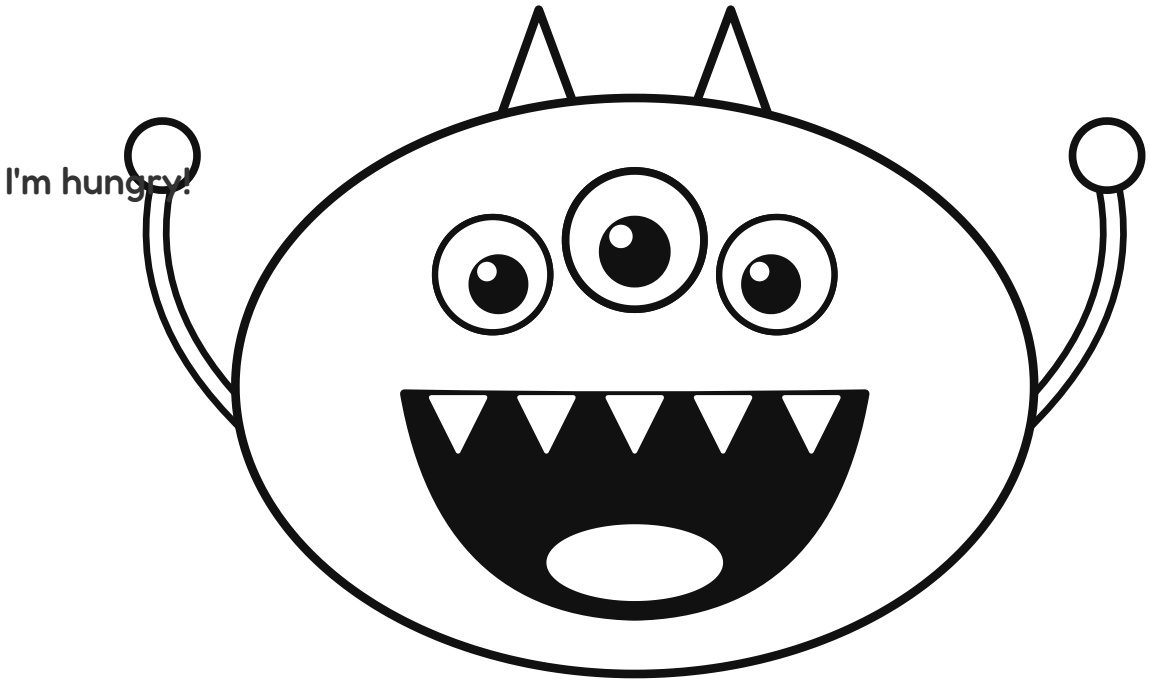
For grown-ups. Thumbs up: the thumb goes in the small hole and points to the sky. Say “open, shut” for each snip. **Easier:** you hold the page while your child snips. **Harder:** stop right at each circle.



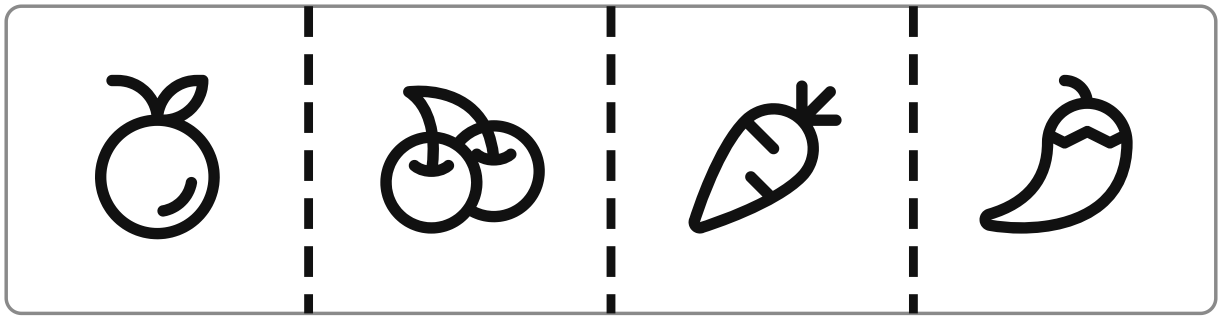
Feed the hungry monster

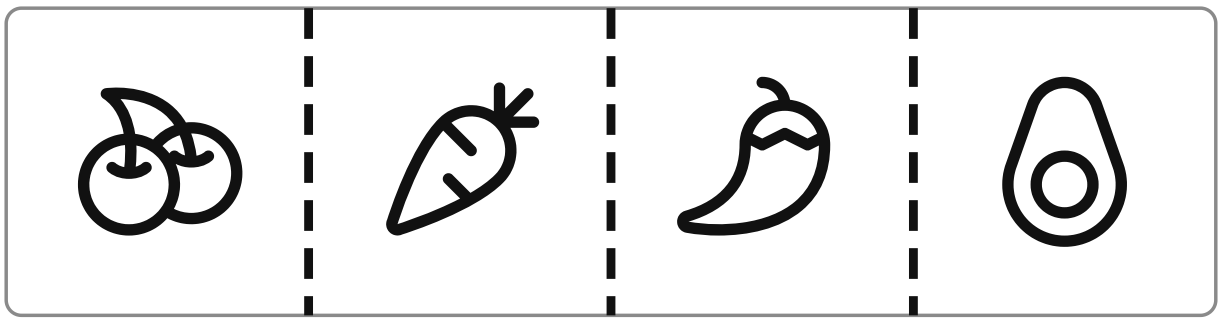
Cut the food apart on the dashed lines. Then feed it to the monster.

Done!



Grown-ups: cut out the strips along the thin grey lines first.



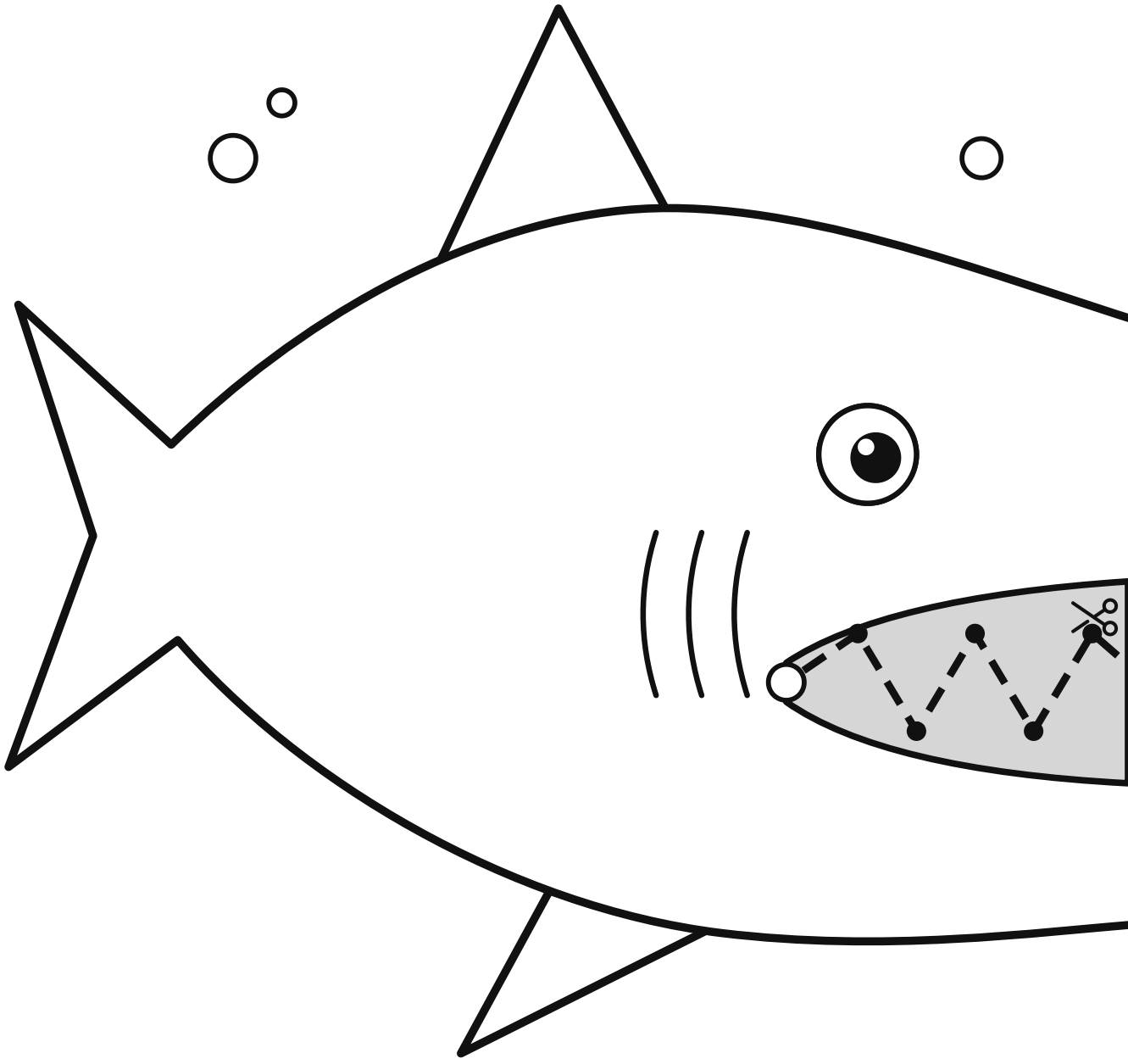


For grown-ups. Watch the helper hand: it holds the strip and stays behind the scissors. **Easier:** cut one piece at a time. **Harder:** stay right on the dashed line.

Give the shark its teeth

Cut the zigzag in from the edge of the page. Stop and turn at every dot ●.

Done!

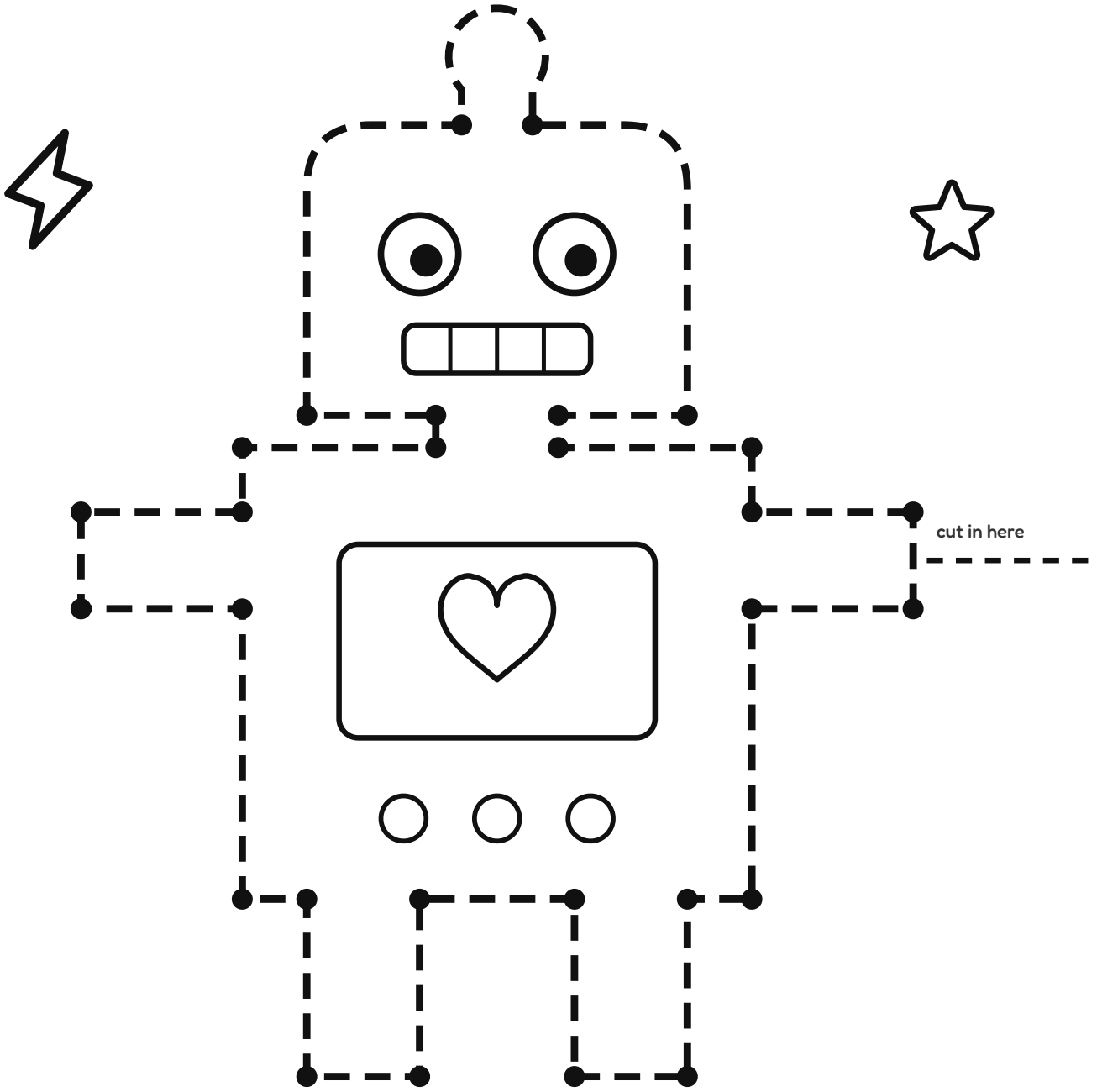


For grown-ups. Zigzags are lots of quick corners. Small snips make the points sharper. **Easier:** cut to the third tooth and stop. **Harder:** stay right on the line.

Cut out the robot

Cut in at the robot's hand. Cut all the way around and stop at every dot ●.

Done!



For grown-ups. Lots of corners plus a round antenna. Take a break whenever you need one. **Easier:** cut a rough box around the robot first. **Harder:** stay right on the line.