



**OSKAR & THE LAST STRAW**  
**The Last Straw**

Grade Levels: 3-5, with adjustment K-2

“How am I supposed to handle this? Where do I even start? I mean, there’s that. And that. And that. And don’t even get me started on that! That is the worst out of all of them! I mean, how am I supposed to handle that? What a burden is this! How unfair is life that I’ve been left to tackle this?! Oh, the agony!”

–Oskar

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**OBJECTIVE**

Students will learn to identify stressful situations and how to cope with them.

**MATERIALS**

- Paper, erasers, markers, crayons, colored pencils, pens, etc.
- “The Last Straw” templates (attached)

**PROCEDURE**

1. In *Oskar and the Last Straw*, a woman comes up to Oskar and asks him to hold her straw. This is a simple task, but Oskar already has many things to do. With everything piling up, Oskar collapses from the weight of the straw.

Explain to students that “the last straw” is a figure of speech (an idiom) for a problem that makes someone lose their temper or that makes something collapse. The last straw is from an Arabic story about a camel. The camel was loaded with straw (hay, unlike Oskar’s drinking straw) until a final piece put on top of the load broke the camel’s back.

2. Ask students if they have ever had to deal with a last straw. Like Oskar, they may have had many things going on and gotten frustrated. See if students can identify the thing that made them feel overwhelmed, stressed-out, or frustrated. Finally, ask students to recall how they dealt with their last straw and who helped them out.
3. Hand out “The Last Straw” templates to students. Ask students to draw a picture of their last straw. Around the straw, have students draw or list the ways they coped with their problem and who helped them out.
4. Once students have finished drawing, ask them to recall who helped Oskar deal with his last straw. When dealing with frustrating situations like this, it is important to have people to rely on. Oskar was able to rely on Coping Cat, his parents and teachers, and Beth and Frank. Ask students to think about a time they helped a friend or family member deal with a frustrating situation. What did they do to help them get everything done? What advice

did they give them? What did it feel like to help another person with their last straw?

5. Have students exchange their last straws and discuss what advice they would give each other to deal with these frustrating situations.

NAME: \_\_\_\_\_

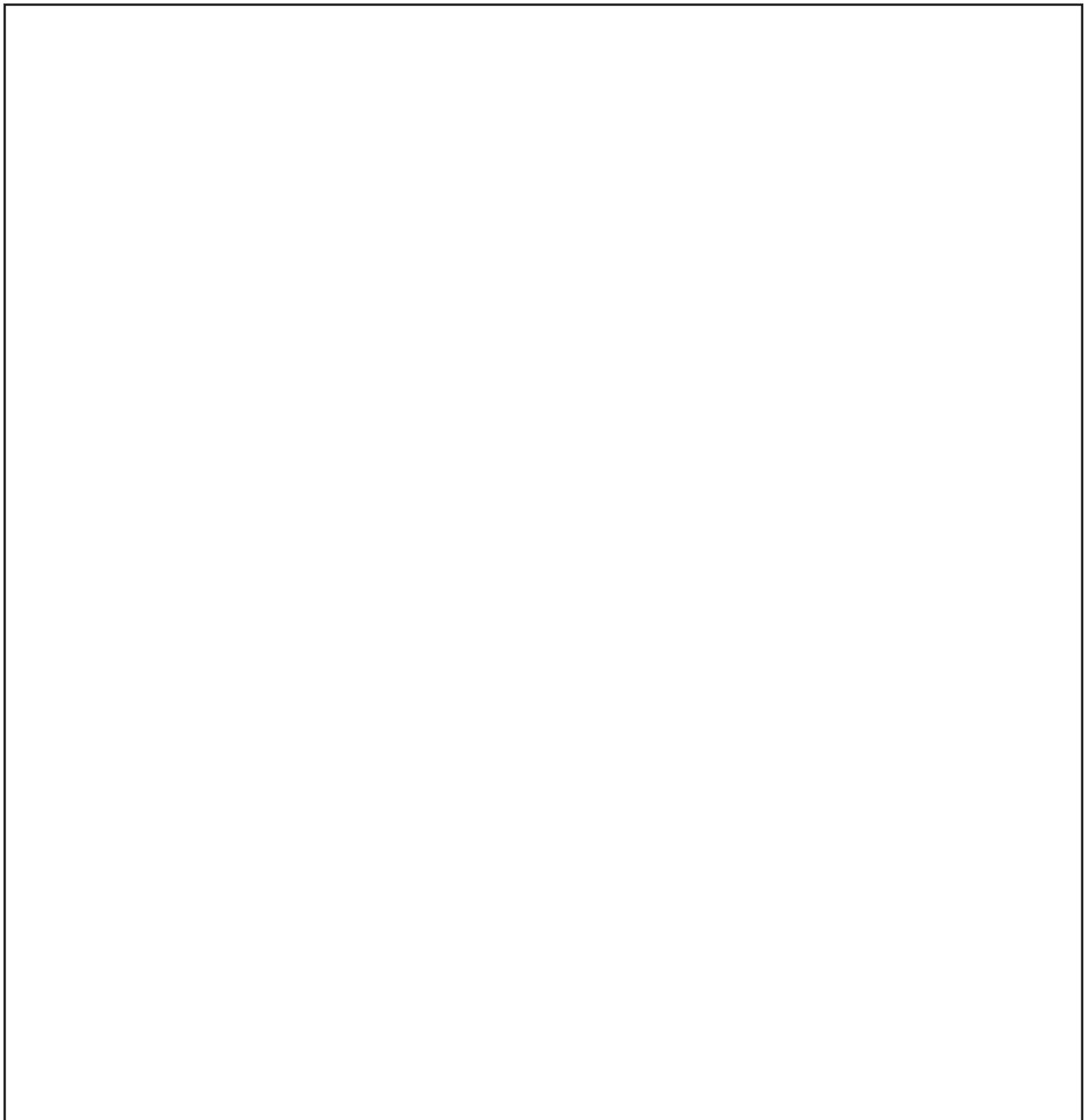
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## **OSKAR & THE LAST STRAW**

### **The Last Straw**

Draw a picture of your own last straw. What does it look like? Is it a specific color? Is it just one thing, or is it made of a lot of things?

Around your last straw, draw ways you can cope with it. How can you solve the problem? Are there any people who can help you out?

A large, empty rectangular box with a thin black border, intended for the student to draw their 'last straw' and ways to cope with it.