

Andrew's Words and Numbers

Hello! My name is Andrew. I am 8 years old.

My sister was 3 years old when I was born. Her name is Astrid. She says this means "star". When I was little, I thought that if my sister was a star then I should be a little star. Well, not really.

Astrid is just a girl's name. The word Astro comes from the Greek language. Astro is a part of many words that are related to stars. For example, Astronomy, Astrology, Astrophotography. Actually, you can just put that "astro" in front of any word. When I do not want to eat my oatmeal in the morning, I can ask my Mom for an astro-spoon. I know she does not have any, because we are not on a star. I know it all because my Dad is an astrophysicist.

Astrid says that she is our parents' favorite – that is why they call her this way. I have to remind her that it is simply because I was not there yet when they were thinking what to call her.

When she keeps at it, I start singing "Twinkle, twinkle little star." Most people know only the first 4 lines, but I have learned all 20. Even though I know all the words in this song I have not counted yet how many there are.

Twinkle, Twinkle, Little Star

By Jane Taylor

Twinkle, twinkle, little star,
How I wonder what you are!
Up above the world so high,
Like a diamond in the sky.

When the blazing sun is gone,
When he nothing shines upon,
Then you show your little light,
Twinkle, twinkle, all the night.

Then the traveler in the dark
Thanks you for your tiny spark,

How could he see where to go,
If you did not twinkle so?

In the dark blue sky you keep,
Often through my curtains peep
For you never shut your eye,
Till the sun is in the sky.

As your bright and tiny spark
Lights the traveler in the dark,
Though I know not what you are,
Twinkle, twinkle, little star.

Usually I do not need more than the first couple of lines, anyway, as Astrid starts chasing me around the house. But I am quicker.

Sometimes my mom says that we behave as self-propelled microbes. You see, my Mom is a microbiologist and often compares people to microbes. When I was little, I thought that “Andrew” was somehow related to microbiology. “Sorry, no relation here,” said my mom, when I asked – “you were named after my dad.” Grandpa Andrew always said that he is happy to have such a wonderful namesake.

I think that there is some connection between astrophysics and microbiology. My dad says that there are billions of stars out there and the distances between them are billions of miles. I do not know how big a “billion” is, but I am sure it is a lot. My mom says that there are billions of microbes in my body. They must be tiny to fit in. I wonder what they are doing there right now... My mom says some of them are good and work in my tummy when I eat, but others are bad and can make me sick. The bad ones often jump on my hands, but I do not see them because they are very small. See them or not, I wash my hands 5 times a day with hot water and soap. This should help.

I wonder whether there is such a word as astromicrobiology...