



A Lesson on The Astronaut's Diary by Maria Jimenez

Grade Level: Grade 4

Subject Area: English Language Arts

Lesson Length: 2 hours

Lesson Keywords: Space, critical thinking, reading comprehension

Lesson Description: The goal for this lesson is to utilize and test students' reading comprehension, writing skills, and critical thinking while allowing them to relate the text with their own experiences and increase their self and emotional awareness.

Common Core Standards Covered with This Lesson

CCSS.ELA-Literacy.W.4.2: Write informative/explanatory texts to examine a topic and convey ideas and information clearly.

CCSS.ELA-Literacy.W.4.4: Produce clear and coherent writing in which the development and organization are appropriate to task, purpose, and audience. (Grade-specific expectations for writing types are defined in standards 1-3 above.)

CCSS.ELA-Literacy.SL.4.4: Report on a topic or text, tell a story, or recount an experience in an organized manner, using appropriate facts and relevant, descriptive details to support main ideas or themes; speak clearly at an understandable pace.

CCSS.ELA-Literacy.L.4.1: Demonstrate command of the conventions of standard English grammar and usage when writing or speaking.

CCSS.ELA-Literacy.L.4.4: Determine or clarify the meaning of unknown and multiple-meaning words and phrases based on grade 4 reading and content, choosing flexibly from a range of strategies.

CCSS.ELA-Literacy.L.4.4a: Use context (e.g., definitions, examples, or restatements in text) as a clue to the meaning of a word or phrase.

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Lesson Content: Book/Story/Reading Passage

Instructions: Please read the following reading passage as many times as needed (aloud and silent) before starting to go through other lesson pages. Understanding the content of this passage is very important since the lesson activities will be all about this content. Feel free to print the passage if needed.

The Astronaut's Diary

by

Content: We were exhausted from all the work. We slept in shifts. One of us had to be awake all the time. There was so much work to do.

Finally, we got to our destination. We had reached the space station. There, we would do more work, but we would have less pressure. We had so much to do every day on our ship. Now there would be more people to help us. We would be on a collaborative team. We would be able to share the work.

When we moved into the space station, I felt great. There was so much more space. We would have real beds to sleep in. We would have better food. They had a garden on the space station. They grew vegetables.

The six astronauts on the space station were happy to see us. They said, We have been waiting for you. We were glad to see them, too. We had been worried. We heard that one of them had been sick.

We asked how she was feeling. She said she was better now. It had been a cold. We were relieved. We could stop worrying now.

That first night on the space station was great. We had good food. We had a good dinner. Then we were going to sleep. But one of the astronauts said, We need to give you a job. Each person has to take turns staying awake. Here is the schedule. So I had a shift again.

I saw I was first. I would have to stay awake tonight. I was disappointed. I felt fatigued. I had been awake and working for 20 hours. But I knew it was my duty. So I sighed and said, See you in the morning.

I became an astronaut so that I could travel in space. Now I'm here. It is hard work. It's even more challenging than I expected.

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Task 1: Vocabulary

Instructions: Please complete the following vocabulary activity by choosing the correct meaning of each word selected from the passage and use of each word correctly in a sentence.

Q: 1 WordPhrase: Fatigued **WordPhraseTier:** 2

Question: In the passage, the author says, "I felt fatigued. I had been awake and working for 20 hours." What does the word "fatigue" mean?

- A: Annoyed
- B: Really tired
- C: Excited
- D: Bored

Question: Which sentence below used the word "fatigued" correctly?

- A: I felt fatigued after a long day at school.
- B: I am fatigued, my family and I are going to Disney tomorrow!
- C: She was fatigued because her neighbors kept banging on the wall.
- D: He felt fatigued doing nothing at home, so he decided to go play outside with his brother.

Q: 2 WordPhrase: Shifts **WordPhraseTier:** 3

Question: The author said "We slept in shifts"... what does the word "shifts" mean?

- A: To do something in pairs.
- B: A type of bed.
- C: Deep sleep.
- D: To take turns at something/a job.

Question: How would you use the word "shifts" in a sentence correctly?

- A: Mary and Lily did their project in a shift.
- B: They had shifts for taking out the dog every week.
- C: Mark went shopping for a shift last Friday.
- D: Matthew was in a shift because he had a really tiring day.

Q: 3 WordPhrase: Challenging **WordPhraseTier:** 2

Question: In the passage, the author says, "It's even more challenging than I expected." What does the word "challenging" mean?

- A: Fun
- B: Tiring
- C: Difficult
- D: Boring

Question: Which sentence correctly uses the word "challenging"?

- A: The science homework last week was challenging for me.
- B: Going to the park with my friends is very challenging!
- C: Being at the beach for a long time can be challenging.
- D: Doing nothing at home is challenging.

Q: 4 WordPhrase: Space Station **WordPhraseTier:** 3

Question: What does the phrase "space station" refer to?

- A: A radio station.
- B: A place on space with research laboratories that conducts experiments in many science fields.
- C: A place on Earth where spacecraft is built, stored, and repaired. Cape Canaveral is an example of a space station.
- D: A gas station on Earth for rockets and other spacecraft.

Question: Which sentence uses the phrase "space station" correctly?

- A: Astronauts in the International Space Station do research on space and send the information back to Earth.
- B: I love listening to the space station when I drive to work.
- C: I went to the space station in Cape Canaveral last week!
- D: All spacecrafts must stop at the space station before take off.

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Task 2: Forum Discussion

Instructions: This discussion forum will have questions for students to respond. Read the posted questions, and respond to each. Students are responsible for posting one initial and two peer responses for each topic.

1 - How would you feel if...

Recall how the astronaut felt after staying up 20 hours or more. How do you think you would feel if you weren't able to sleep for 20 hours or more?

2 - Sick Astronaut

The astronaut said that one of the astronauts at the space station was sick. Why do you think they would be worried? What kind of difficulties would they face if it had been something worse than a cold?

3 - Taking Shifts

Why do you think they had to take shifts at sleeping and staying awake? Can you think of any reasons that would require one of them to always be on watch?

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Task 3: Writing Activity

Instructions: Prior to reading the passage, did you want to be an astronaut? After reading an astronauts diary, has your opinion changed? Why or why not? Write a 2-5 paragraph answer and support your reasons with evidence from the passage.

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