



A Lesson on The Astronaut's Diary by Samuel Zatko

Grade Level: Grade 4

Subject Area: English Language Arts

Lesson Length: 45 minutes

Lesson Keywords: Reading, writing, astronaut, astronauts, space station

Lesson Description: The goal of this lesson is to give the students the ability to decipher meaning behind new words, discuss some of what can only be assumed from the given text, and to read closely in order to reflect upon the potential challenges an Astronaut would face as part of their daily job.

Common Core Standards Covered with This Lesson

CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RL.4.1: Refer to details and examples in a text when explaining what the text says explicitly and when drawing inferences from the text.

CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RL.4.2: Determine a theme of a story, drama, or poem from details in the text; summarize the text.

CCSS.ELA-Literacy.W.4.1: Write opinion pieces on topics or texts, supporting a point of view with reasons and information.

CCSS.ELA-Literacy.W.4.1b: Provide reasons that are supported by facts and details.

CCSS.ELA-Literacy.L.4.3: Use knowledge of language and its conventions when writing, speaking, reading, or listening.

CCSS.ELA-Literacy.L.4.3a: Choose words and phrases to convey ideas precisely.

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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: Collaborative **WordPhraseTier:** 2

Question: In the story, the author says: "We would be on a collaborative team." What does the word "collaborative" mean in this sentence?

- A: Working alone.
- B: Two or more people working together.
- C: People who are friends.
- D: People who are enemies.

Question: Which of the sentences below uses the word "Collaborative" correctly?

- A: It wasn't easy, in fact it was quite collaborative.
- B: The ocean water was cold and made me collaborative.
- C: We all worked together as our boss said it was supposed to be a "collaborative" effort.
- D: She was collaborative when she drove down the street.

Q: 2 WordPhrase: Relieved **WordPhraseTier:** 2

Question: In the passage the author says: "She said she was better now. It had been a cold. We were relieved. We could stop worrying now." In this example, what does the word "relieved" mean?

- A: No longer feeling worried or stressed.
- B: Needing something to drink.
- C: Being angry.
- D: Being fearful.

Question: Choose the sentence that correctly uses the word "relieved":

- A: Jen thought Chris would be relieved when he failed his test.
- B: The woman was relieved to lose her car keys.
- C: When Ben fell off the tree and onto a rock he was very relieved.
- D: I was very relieved when my dog came home after being lost for three days.

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

Question: In this passage, the author says: "Finally, we got to our destination. We had reached the space station." What does the term "space station" mean?

- A: A train station in Florida.
- B: A bank.
- C: A place built for astronauts to live and work in, which is sent into space and then keeps going around the earth.
- D: An underground fort.

Question: Which of these sentences uses the term "space station" correctly?

- A: The space station orbited around Earth once per day.
- B: The space station was on the menu at the cafeteria today.
- C: My brother is a space station.
- D: Jack listened to the space station on the radio after school.

Q: 4 WordPhrase: Astronaut **WordPhraseTier:** 3

Question: The author says: "I became an astronaut so that I could travel in space." What does the word "astronaut" mean in this sentence?

- A: A cowboy.
- B: A person who is trained to travel in space.
- C: Someone who works at a grocery store.
- D: The principal of the school.

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

- A: He planted the astronaut in the garden and waited for it to bloom.
- B: Leah put the astronaut in the microwave for three minutes just like the box said.
- C: James said he wanted to become an astronaut when he was older so he could go to the moon.
- D: Many sea creatures can be seen at the Aquarium, such as turtles and even an astronaut.

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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 - Astronauts staying awake

In the first line of the passage, the author says: We were exhausted from all the work. We slept in shifts. One of us had to be awake all the time.

Why do you think at least one astronaut would have to stay awake while the other astronauts sleep in space?

2 - Sickness in space

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.

Why might the main character of the story be worried about someone being sick in the space station?

3 - Chores on the space station

The author says: 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.

What are some chores, tasks, or jobs you could imagine an astronaut having to do aboard the space station?

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Task 3: Writing Activity

Instructions: For your writing assignment, you will describe two challenges an Astronaut might face while living in space (food/water, washing clothing, gravity, sleeping as some examples) and explain why these challenges would be different in space than they would be on Earth. You must write at least two paragraphs with a total of 100 words.

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